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ABSTRACT

Twelve papers delivered at a joint meeting at the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions annual meeting of the Children's Libraries, Public Libraries, and Libraries for the Blind sections of the Division of Libraries Serving the General Public are presented. Most of the papers deal with library services to children, but several are devoted to literacy issues and services to the blind. The following papers are included: (1) "Promotion of Reading Habits through Home Libraries" (S. Panandiker); (2) "Katha and Its Literacy Projects" (G. Dharmarajan); (3) "Children's Books and Children's Libraries in India" (M. Rao); (4) "Illiteracy and Blindness" (A. Leach); (5) "Guidelines for Public Libraries Working with Illiteracy" (B. Thomas); (6) "A Review of the Draft Document 'International Guidelines for Public Libraries Involved in Literacy Work: A Developing Country View'" (H. K. Raskroka); (7) "A Country Overview of Inter-Library Loan Services of Special Format Material for the Visually Handicapped in India" (V. S. Rawat); (8) "Literacy and Development in the Third World: Could Librarianship Make a Difference?" (R. Gassol de Horowitz); (9) "International Cooperation on Library Services to the Visually Handicapped: Outcome of the Asian Seminar" (H. Kawamura); (10) "Thai-Laos Project on Books for Young People" (S. Singlamanan); (11) "Promotion of Literacy of Handicapped Children in India through Library Services" (C. D. Tamboli); and (12) "Meeting the Needs of Students at an International School" (B. Sen). Several papers are followed by references. (SLD)

IFLA GENERAL CONFERENCE NEW DELHI 1992

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Joint Meeting with:

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PROMOTION OF READING HABITS THROUGH HOME LIBRARIES

Surekha Panandiker

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PROMOTION OF READING HABITS THROUGH HOME LIBRARIES

Surekha Panandiker

Abstract:

A personal touch is required to introduce children to books and literature. Though provided at an earlier time by the oral tradition and largely by grandparents, this was lost through printing and the nuclear family's loss of the grandparent. Financial constraints keep books out of the reach of many children; libraries bring them within their reach. The Association of Writers and Illustrators (AWIC) have established home libraries in neighbourhoods through member volunteers who keep the library in her home open twice weekly for two hours. For two rupees (less than three cents) per month, the child can have eight books with no other deposit. Many book-related activities such as quizzes, storytelling, storypainting, dramatization, etc. are provided by the volunteers. This is a unique project that won the 1990 IBBY Asahi reading promotion award.

PROMOTING The READING HABIT THROUGH CHILDREN's LIBRARIES - AWIC MODEL

- Surekha Panandiker

In Delhi, if you are in a residential colony around 4.00 P.M. and find a group of children in front of any house, more often than not, it must be a children's library of the Association of Writers and Illustrators for children. If you just peep in you may find a dining table, or a little place in a corner, a side board, piano top or even a staircase~~s~~ turned into a children's library. Place or money do not constrain if there is a will and devotion. And the AWIC member volunteers who run these libraries have plenty of both.

These children's libraries are very popular with children. The secret of their success is, the loving personal touch along with good books. A personal touch is very necessary to introduce children to literature and books. It was provided in our oral tradition by Kathakar or story teller, and at home by grand-parents. This touch is lost when printed words came in. With the emergence of nuclear famil~~y~~ies grandparents became a rarity. How do we then attract children to books and inculcate the reading habit in them. The Answer is through libraries with understanding librarians. This is what is provided by the AWIC children's library.

There is no stern voice of a teacher or parents telling them not to touch this or that book~~s~~. Nor are there strict rules that keep them away from books. Here children can touch, feel and browse through books, and pick up one that catches his or her fancy and borrow it for a week. When a child finds it difficult to choose, 'auntie' of the library guides him to make the choice from the variety of books. A young reader can wonder with ALICE. He can become a little Sherlock Holmes and solve the mystery of the stolen Buddha or enjoy the thrill of travelling through thick jungles of India. There are evergreen stories from Ramayan, Mahabharat and Panchatantra. Next is our own Superman 'Hanuman'. There are Robots and people from Alien Planets. Thus there is enough variety of books for a child to choose. There is a choice of language too. Apart from English and Hindi, there are books of the regional language in the outstation libraries of AWIC. This enchanting world of books provided by AWIC children's libraries is within ~~the~~ walking distance for the child in that locality.

BACKGROUND

This unique venture was started in 1983 when as authors and illustrators of children books we realise that the children do want to read books but are not able to get them.

It is true that in developing countries, financial constraints of a family keep books out of the reach of the majority of the children. But poverty is not the only cause. If it had been so, then through out the developing countries, and in all parts of India the situation should have been the same. But in some parts of India, parents buy books and there is well developed book culture, whereas in other parts parents buy expensive toys, clothes, spend money on films and restaurants. Thus more than money, it is the matter of attitude of parents, their values and awareness. The survey conducted by the Association of Writers and Illustrators for children had shown that the parents earning three to four thousands rupees per month were not ready to spend even one rupee on children's books. Parents do not realise that good books are essential ~~input of~~ growing up process. Books provide healthy nourishment for their minds, their psychological and emotional development.

Many times parents do not know what books to give to children and where to get them. Few publishers bring out catalogues and these are available only at few places. So the only way to ~~teach~~ give books to children is through libraries - special libraries for children or special children's books section in the general libraries and school libraries.

We found that according to National Library of Calcutta, there are 25,000 public libraries in India. Out ~~of~~ which only about 500 have children's section. Exclusive libraries for children ~~are hardly~~ fifty. Prominent among them is Dr. B.C. Roy Children's Library run by Children

Book Trust and Delhi Public Library in Jor Bagh. Most of these libraries are one unit library. Children have to depend on parents to go to libraries. In their busy schedule, it is not always possible for parents to bring children ~~in~~ to these public libraries.

In India children between the age group of 4 to 14 constitute 25 percent of the 800 million population. That means 200 million children require books to read.

According to the report of the Ministry of Human Resource Development, there are 5.50 lakh primary schools and 1.44 lakhs middle schools in the country. Together they enroll 129.4 million children. But hardly 10 percent of the schools have libraries for children. Only the schools in cities and towns provide library. There are books in these school libraries, but no care is taken about their selection. With the exception of a few schools, the books are not issued to children for the unwarranted fear of children losing and damaging the books. So books remain locked in the cupboards.

After considering this background the members of the Association felt that unless our books reach the children, the aim of AWIC to develop good literature for children will not be fulfilled. Thus the idea of neighbourhood libraries where children can walk ~~down~~ was readily accepted. Once it was approved no hurdles could stop the dedicated members of AWIC from going ahead.

THE PROCEDURE

A Convener and a library committee was appointed. Donations of cash and books were collected from members, friends and well-wishers. Publishers were requested to donate one set free and give maximum discounts on purchase of books. They responded favourably.

All books are collected at the office of AWIC. The library committee selects the books after evaluation. This ensures that only the good and desirable books go into the hands of children. ~~After the~~ selection ~~books are accessed~~. A very simple classification is adopted as these libraries are run by volunteers and not by professional librarians. These books are then issued to member-volunteers who run these libraries in their respective neighbourhood.

Simple and straight rules were formed for opening the libraries. Only a member of AWIC can open the library in his or her area. Preference is

Any Wednesday and the last Saturday of the month, a Librarian can exchange the titles which are read for new ones from the Central Office.

THE KIT

After these simple rules are explained a library kit is given to the volunteer-librarian. The kit consists of :

1. A bag
2. A display board
3. Handouts
4. Membership application forms
5. A receipt book
6. I like it cards
7. Diaries
8. Book marks
9. A register
10 150 to 200 books
11 Monthly report forms

A member of AWIC can start a library outside Delhi when he is recommended by a Delhi member and approved by the executive. He has to follow the same rules.

As he cannot come to exchange the books every month, he is given only 100 books in the kit, the rest of the things ~~are~~ the same. But the cost of Rs. 200 is charged for the other materials ~~[illegible], register, [illegible]~~ in the kit. 100 books are donated by the Central Office. To enable him to collect more books, especially in ~~for~~ the local language, an authority letter is given to him with a request to the publisher to give a maximum discount on the purchase as he is organising the library on behalf of AWIC.

To reach more children, AWIC has also cooperated with other institutions who are working among children to open libraries. These institutions can become our institutional members and get the know-how from us. We provide kits ~~and apart from~~ with Rs. 200 towards the costs ~~of kit~~, and we take a security of Rs. 1,000 per 100 books. Because these institutions do get or have funds for their activities, and being a voluntary organisation ourselves we cannot afford to give them books free.

Progress so far: With modest beginnings on 9th April, 1983 of 8 libraries in Delhi and one in Meerut (U.P.) we have maintained slow and steady progress. Today we have 31 libraries in Delhi and 15 ourside Delhi.

More than the number of libraries, what is significant is the area and strata of society to which we are catering. Two of our libraries are in slum areas where children had never seen story books before. One [illegible] library is catering to children whose parents are daily wage earners and have no educational background. In Punjab, libraries are in rural areas where there is no other means of entertainment for children. The library in North East India is catering to the tribal children.

In Allahabad, the library is in the park.

In Delhi, our libraries in far flung residential colonies, are the only venue where children can see and read books, as the book shops are rare, and they hardly keep any childrens books worth the name. No wonder children are enthusiastic about the libraries and its activities. It is very difficult to sustain the initial enthusiasm. Activities are organised to keep up the interest and enthusiasm of children. Story telling is still the best way to attrac~~c~~t children. Which child can resist the call 'SUNO KAHANI' or "long ago, so long ago there live~~e~~d a king." Story painting also absorbs children. Little artists with their pencils and crayons make ~~the library~~ a colourful dramatisation of a story and bring out the acting talents in them.

" [illegible] "

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But most popular are the Quiz competitions. Even the little one~~s~~ want~~s~~ to participate. The young readers of our libraries become members of a jury for children's choice Award (Binntel) organised by AWIC. It is remarkable that - the whole team is working on a voluntary basis. To encourage and recognise their work a 'Librarian of the Year' award is given to the librarian who is regular in giving feedback, encouraging children and motivating them to read.

We cannot ignore our young readers. From each library a child is selected by the librarian on the basis of his regularity and interest shown in reading books for the 'Reader of the Year' award. These awards are given at the Annual General Meeting of the Association.

In short, we can proudly say that during last eight years we have introduced ten thousand children into the world of books. Our hour of triumph came when the AWIC Children's Library project got the IBBY - Asahi Reading Promotion Award of 1991. This award has eased our finances a bit but it also means the responsibility to reach many more children.

Problems: Initially parents were very apprehensive. They feared that reading of non-text books will slacken the academic progress of their children. But when they realised that the concentration of children improves after reading interesting books, their language gets better, their general knowledge increases, they can do their project work better after consulting information books in our libraries, parents now are more cooperative. They are coming to help in organising activities in our libraries.

Regular supply of books many times becomes difficult. Children like to have particular types of books and enough titles are not always available in the preferred language. Personal problems of a volunteer, sometimes forces the volunteer to ~~wind up~~ close the library. But we do not get disheartened if one library is closed and a new one is opened at other place. The team work of the AWIC children's library project keeps on going. There is a lot of work still to be done.

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Scope: This nine years experience has convinced us that these area libraries have tremendous potential. Considering the large number of children in India, the demand for libraries will further increase with the spread of education and increase in the literacy rate from 43.6 to 52.1 percent.

Children's libraries will have to cover different parts and localities. Apart from residential colonies in urban areas, they can be opened in urban slums. They can be organised in labour colonies of the industrial townships and children's wards of the hospital.

In the rural atmosphere, children books will motivate them to literacy and they can be good input for post literacy programmes.

Through the actrivities in these libraries, the local culture like folk songs, legends and plays can be preserved and revived.

If financial assistance comes forth, a little honorarium to the volunteers motivated from the local population can provide part time employment. This can also be linked to women's development by selecting women to look after the libraries.

By opening libraries, the demand for children's books will be increased, thus giving a boost to the publishing industry. In short childrens' libraries have tremendous socio-economic and cultural potential.

Difficulties are bound to be there. The major one is of availability of books - especially in a developing country like India, with multi-language needs. At present hardly 3000 books of one title are published. Can publishers meet the challenge? I am sure they will, as the experience of the "operation black board scheme" has shown publishers do cater to demand.

To run these libraries local volunteers can be trained by a motivational programme with little basic instructions of accession of books and

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maintaining records. We at AWIC have evolved such a programme and can provide resource persons. ~~for it~~

These children's libraries do not need massive buildings. Existing community centres, school buildings after school hours, and panchayat halls can be used in rural areas. In urban areas, a small part of a house can become the children's library.

Finances can be found. Already in rural areas some money is earmarked for cultural activities, and for aanganwadies. A little more can be contributed by local people and the library can be started.

Other organisations like Lions Club, Rotary Club, Industrial Houses; and private donors can fund these libraries.

An AWIC Children's Library with 200 books and other materials including administrative expenses work out for about $200. Another $200 per year per library as running expenses can assure the continuity of the library. This is not a big sum from international standards but developing countries may find it difficult to arrange.

But with cooperation of different international agencies, voluntary organisations and a little support from the government, it is possible to spread a network of children's libraries in developing countries. The AWIC model has shown that with little resources one can cater to a large number of children if you have dedicated volunteers. The AWIC model can be multiplied if other organisations take it up. The AWIC can provide the guidance and know-how; It is a team work and as our traditional prayer says, if we all think alike, work together, we can achieve anything so let us resolve and say "Sang-gatchatvam, Sang Vadatwam, Sango manasi Jayatam ....."

SUREKHA PANANDIKER
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IFLA GENERAL CONFERENCE NEW DELHI 1992

Division: Libraries serving the general Public

Section/RT: Children's Libraries

Joint Meeting with: Libraries for the Blind + Public Libraries

82-CHILD-2|BLIND-1|PUBL-2(W
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WORKSHOP THEME (IF APPLICABLE):

Literacy for All

Katha & its Literacy Projects

Name : Geeta Dharmarajan

Title : Executive Director, KATHA, a registered non-profit Society devoted to creative communication for development

New Delhi, India

For internal use only:

Meeting No: 141

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82 - Child/Blind/Pub.

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FROM : Geeta Dharmarajan

COMMENTS: Revised paper for IFLA Conf. is enclosed. As
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GEETA DHARMARAJAN

C II 27 TILAK LANE
NEW DELHI - 110 001
TELEPHONE : 386873

24.6.'92

Dear Mr. Roberts,

Dr. Shirley Fitzgibbons asked me to fax a copy of my revised paper to you (actually, there were some pages missing in my earlier fax, and I took the opportunity to revise it, after seeing the programme for September 3).

I hope this paper will serve. In case you'd like me to change/revise anything, please do let me know.

Looking forward to seeing you in Delhi.

With warm regards.

Geeta

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82 (WS) BL/Ch/[illegible].

BIO-DATA

1

Name : Geeta Dharmarajan

Title : Executive Director, KATHA, a registered non-profit Society devoted to creative communication for development

New Delhi, India

Brief prography:

A writer for children, Geeta is the author of 10 books for children. Five of these have been translated into Bangla; and Red Kite has been translated into most of the 14 major Indian languages. She also writes for adults –both fiction and non-fiction. Previously Assistant Editor of Target, a magazine for children (published in India) and the Pennsylvania Gazette (the alumni Magazine of the University of Pennsylvania, Philadephia, U.S.A.) Geeta is a co-editor of Katha Prize Stories (heading for its 3rd printing in 8 months) and of Separate Journeys a collection of stories by Indian women that is to be published simultaneously from India and U.K. this year. Four years back she started KATHA, a registered non-profit Society devoted to creative communication for development and today is KATHA's Executive Director and Editor of TAMASA! a health, environment and story magazine for rural and urban first generation school-goers.

Katha & its Literacy Projects

KATHA is a registered nonprofit society devoted to creative communication for development. It was registered, most serendipitously on World Literacy Day, September 8, 1989. One of the main objectives of Katha is to help children and adults discover books and the joy of reading.

Katha came into being to publish a magazine called Tamasha! that I had started working on in August of 1988. *Tamasha!* was to be a simple magazine that would be fun for children in rural India. It would carry some small stories which would focus on health, and talk of loving animals and planting trees.

But Tamasha! refused to stay small. It has gradually grown into a quarterly magazine specially designed for the neoliterate child, the first-generation school-goer. We believe that children who are not yet fluent readers, for whom the act of reading is still not pleasurable, need a special magazine that will help them build their reading muscles, that will make reading a pleasurable exercise for them.

Tamasha! has been a stepping stone for Katha's venture into literacy and post-literacy – through research and development, publication, and through a field literacy programme which started with 6 children and now has 550 children and about 80 women who live in one of Delhi's largest slum clusters. And hence, I'd like to start off now with *Tamasha!*

TAMASHA!

"I have only Rs. 2/- Can you please send me *Tamasha!* every month?" asks a girl from a small village in the southern-most tip of India.

"My postmaster tells me *Tamasha!* I must see. Can you send me a free copy?"

A designer working with barely literate villagers in Rajasthan finds *Tamasha!* useful in her work. Could she buy more copies?

An organization working in 135 villages in the Himalayan area wants 135 complimentary copies. We are able to provide some free. Some they buy, saying, "We shall circulate these to all the villages. Don't worry," they say.

Government of India and UNICEF, when they launch a massive campaign for spreading awareness about IDD, buy 60,000 copies of Tamasha! to spread their messages amongst children.

Tamasha! is an acronym for The Activity Magazine for Spreading Health Awareness. The magazine which came into being due to the enthusiastic support of Augustine Veliath in the Delhi office of UNICEF, in April 1989, today reaches out to about 50,000 schools and individuals. The per copy readership is at least 5 - 20 times what it is for the average magazine(6 readers/copy). Tamasha! has printruns of upto 160,000 copies for individual issues.

Tamasha! over the last three years, has been growing sensitive to the needs of first-generation school-goers. After opur first three issues we stopped production to do a survey. Our first survey showed up our ignorance in many matters. There were so many children who never went to school. So many more who went to nonformal education or NFE centres. We were amazed to find that simple things that we took for granted become hurdles in the path of hesitant readers.

For example, TAMASHA! does not carry double-column text. Because most of our readers do not know how the story flows! We try each quarter to have a magazine that addresses itself to the needs of our reader: attractive, well-designed material; simple words; short sentences; not too many words to a page; stories and poems by some of India's best-loved writers like Rabindranath Tagore, Shankar, Ismail Meeruthi. Keeping within our rather rigid parameters, we have, till now, talked about diarrhoea management, immunization, the girl child, iodine deficient diseases, safe motherhood, drinking water, rights of the child, sustainable development, and population growth. The magazine strives to give the child what she/he wants to read; an exciting mix of fantasy, stories, environment, health and development issues. People tell us that they like *Tamasha!* It is used not only in literacy programmes, but also in nonformal education, as post-literacy material, amongst nurses and others who know their subject but not always how to carry their ideas to their target audience.

It didn't take us long to realise that we could not talk of a magazine for the first-generation school-goer without, at the same time, thinking about the vast number of children who went to nonformal education centres, children who were either school dropouts or who had never been to school.

Today, Katha sees literacy as a integrated topic which needs input from various directions simultaneously. We feel that post-literacy material must be developed side by side with the development of literacy skills in a child; that fun reading material and books should be available for a child, a range of material, fiction and nonfiction; that the teacher's resource should be assiduously built-up and renewed constantly; that the family's economic development makes or breaks the child's chances to stay literate.

Amongst its various activities, I'd like to mention some projects of Katha pertaining to literacy and neoliteracy:

1. TAMASHA!	A health & fun magazine for the first generation schoolgoer in rural & urban India
2. KALPAVRIKSHAM	Development of basic literacy material for children who have never been to school/school dropouts. For use in nonformal education centres.
3. KATHOP-KATHAN	A survey and networking project. We have just completed a survey in two rural blocks of two of India's largest states, Bihar and Rajasthan on "print communication and the rural child."
4. TEXT BOOK PROJECT	Research & development of textbooks as self-study aids, for the first generation schoolgoer.
5. KATHA LOK	Collection of stories, riddles, songs etc. from six states of India for development of literacy material
6. KATHA VACHAK	Post-literacy material for adults, especially women
7. KHAZANA	A learning centre for 550 urban slum children in Delhi. An integrated project which [illegible] (for 3 - 6 year olds) and an income generation and skills upgradation programme for women of this community.

One other interlinked project of Katha is KATHA VILASAM, a story research & resource centre, focussing on translations from one Indian language into another.

For the first three years of Katha, while we worked out of my home, somehow our office had got identified in the minds of children going to the government school in the neighbourhood, as a place for books. They thirsted for books to read. This led us into our very first project in literacy. And KHAZANA.

KHAZANA

I still remember the inaugural day. We had a mela. We had the dancers and the rope walkers; the magicians and the snake charmers, the merry-go-rounds and the littlest of the giant wheels. But we were thinking literacy. So we had tucked in a small book stall into a corner of the field that was next to our "school" building. We had bought books in the market and had decided to sell them for a rupee each. We thought the stall would be neglected.

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We were mobbed. Children came clutching ten rupee notes in their fists. "We want TEN books!" they said. "Can you have a regular book shop?" And these were children who had never been to a school, or had dropped out of it so long ago that they had slid back into illiteracy.

With renewed courage, we started off. We would stop with 50 children, we thought. But when you work with a neglected forgotten community like an urban slum, nothing stays small. Or simple. The people we worked with lived in the most crowded area in Delhi: 600/hectacre. Many of them are migrants from Bihar, West Bengal or are displaced persons from East Pakistan. Many of them also belong to the scheduled castes. Most of the children had not attended any type of educational institution.

The Khazana Experiment has, besides a library, we run our own nonformal "learning and education centre." Amongst other child-centred activities, Khazana has a creche, a balwadi (for 3 - 6 year olds), a nonformal education center(for 7 - 14 year olds); it has tutorial classes in an effort to help the working child stay in school; we are committed to publishing a textbook for the first-generation school-goer. Vocational classes and a special club for the adolescent girl – a balika mandal.

We have been in Govindpuri since 1990. Each one of our women in the slums, would love to give her children books to read. Would love to enrich their lives. If they don't, it is because they can't. I felt that we had no right to tell people about how to bring up their children, or make them literate, without first giving the women a strong economic base.

So. Khazana today, is an effort to look at children and women, their environment and the economic development of the family through the efforts of the community, and its women. This is an attempt at an integrated approach to tackle the myriad problems faced by children living in one urban slum. I'm sure you will agree that such all-round development of the individual is the first step towards a community's confident assays into self- reliance. With time, we hope that this will be the foundation on which we build a better future for our children.

KALPAVRIKSHAM

One of the immediate problem in Khazana was: What do you give children eager to start reading to read? There was so little available that catered to the child who was mature, intelligent but who didn't have the necessary reading skills.

For a long time we looked around for exciting books for our children. We wanted basic literacy books that would be fun, that would be also right for their age: babyish stuff would not do for street-wise boys and girls who knew most of the facts of life.

Slowly, other issues surfaced. The problems we faced in Khazana were those other nongovernment agencies like ours working with disadvantaged children were also experiencing:

1. Very little money; 2. No networking amongst organizations, so very little chance for people to get to know the work of others; 3. Lack of exciting, fun teaching material. 4. Lack of trained teachers who would be able to handle the sensitive and demanding job of working with working children who probably come in to class tired, listless, malnourished, overworked. 5. Lack of any kind of continued support for the teachers, who many times are first-generation literates themselves. 6. We felt that making children literate and opening up the exciting world in which they live, could be exciting for the facilitator, if only she/he had the resources.

Kalpavriksham set itself to address these identified needs in as integrated a way as possible. We ventured into the research and development of a basic literacy kit for children.

Hulgul ka Pitara

Our first basic kit for literacy develops what we would like to believe is a innovative method for teaching NFE children to read Hindi. It is based on the word and not on the letter because we found that our children didn't have the patience to learn their alphabets without having some kind of reward; the reward that the child gets in the kit we devised was a story. And not just one, but four!

Hulgul ka Pitara

- has a limited vocabulary of 250 words. These words are repeated over and over again in five books, games, a poster for the classroom.
- has a teacher's handbook included;
- includes workshops for teachers in NFE; initially to help them use the Pitara effectively; later, as and when needed, to increase their resource base;
- has a newsletter that will come out periodically, for the teacher's use; to supplement the workshops and contact sessions;
- has a club for children in NFE to encourage and foster creativity in them;
- possibility of getting Tamasha! regularly; hints on activities such as building up a library in the classroom, helping children bring out their own magazine (In Khazana, our children bring out their's, called "Bhale! Bhale!")
- is low-priced. (We wanted to keep the price of the kit as low cost as possible; but, without a grant of any kind, we were not able to subsidise it further than to Rs. 95/- for a class of 15 children.)

The kit was an instant hit when it was first put up for sale in the World Book Fair in February 1992. And now more than 300 NFE centres in the Hindi belt are using the kit to teach their children to read, to become literate! In fact, when the Overseas Development Agency(U.K.) started its slum improvement programme in Indore, they asked Katha to run a workshop for their teachers in NFE methods, using the kit. And, later, when they started a massive programme in Calcutta, Katha was again called to do a workshop with one of their consultants from U.K., on pre- literacy skills development in 3 - 6 year olds.

THE TEXTBOOK PROJECT

We had been rather disturbed to find that children living in the three juggi-jhompri clusters in Govindpuri where we had started working in September of 1989, were not coping very well with school. This was nothing new. For many years Government has been worried about the low level of performance of children in government and government-aided schools.

Concerned, KHAZANA started a small tutorial section for children who desperately needed help. Today, Khazana has about 150 students under this programme who come for extra coaching in Science, Maths, English, Hindi and Social Studies.

But, solutions often have a rather uncomfortable way of spawning more problems than they solve. Thus it was with our tutorial programme.

We found that, for example,

– 95% of those coming for extra coaching are First Generation Learners.

– Most students seem to have a problem understanding their texts. For example, we have found that a child in Grade 1 may understand every word in her/his textbook; but a child in Grade 5 or 6 understands one out of every 8 to 10 words from the printed text.

– Mathematical operations are being performed without conceptual clarity. For example, 1.5 was being reported as greater than 12 by our children because of the numbers used. (These children are doing multiplication & division of decimals in their formal school classrooms)

From the close interactions we had with the children coming to us and the feedback we obtained from the teachers in formal schools, we realised that one of the major problems that stands in the way of children continuing in school is the fact that they cannot understand their textbooks. There is no need of statistics for the number of children who drop out of school, swell the child labour force and then, before long, have slid back into illiteracy. They now have no option but to tread the path of their parents: unskilled, low-paid jobs. If we said we cared, we thought we must do whatever we could about stopping children from dropping out of school.

So, side by side and willy nilly, another Katha project took off: our textbook project. We knew there was no money, but results in schools were dismal in 1991 and we were too small to be heard: that children in government and government-aided schools are first-generation literates with very special needs. We thought that we would need to make textbooks comprehensible to the children. This was important since the prescribed textbooks formed the basis of classroom teaching and learning.

To cut a long story short, Katha now has initiated an unfunded project to prepare text books as resource material that is available to the first generation schoolgoer as a self-learning-text to supplement the child's learning at school.

KATHALOK

This March, we ventured into another related area. Collection of folk and stories from the oral tradition, in an attempt to make literacy and post-literacy material for children and adults that would be relevant, familiar and hence, hopefully provide more incentive to become literate. The funding for the project came from The National Institute of Adult Education for what we call the Kathalok project.

India, with its rich heritage and long and variegated history has an enormous and fascinating collection of 'Lok- sahitya' or folklore, that has been passed down from generation to generation in the form of *oral communication*. The history of publication of folklore collections in India dates back to 1868. Over the years *folkloric studies* in India has gathered impetus and has been taken up by several litterateurs, historians, anthropologists, etc. In fact the vitality and vigour of Indian folklores are so aweinspiring that we were convinced that the best material for neoliterates could be an exciting mix of stories that are written with an eye to certain renewed stories that are not the usual myths and legends but folk literature that has been handed down through the ages and which reflect a well-developed concern for the environment, the people's movement, and for the ordinary pleasures of everyday life.

So we, in the last six months have gone out into four major language areas – Tamilnadu, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal; and in the Hindi belt, into the dialectal belts of Chattisgarhi, Bhojpuri and Mythili, to document the unwritten, tales from the oral tradition as narrated by kathaks, villages elders. We have also documented poems children recite while playing, riddles, jokes, proverbs and idioms of particular dialects.

As a next step, we hope to develop a series of books and other teaching material for *nonformal education* for children particular to that dialectal belt, starting with the Hindi dialects. This approach, we believe, would be very helpful for children and adolescents to become literate, because of their prior knowledge of the text and also because of familiarity of the dialect concerned, leading on to formal education in Hindi.

CONCLUSION

There are many issues that, as a writer for children, I feel troubled about. Is there a solution, an answer to something summoned up by the primitive logic of childhood? And, what about the other doubts, the other unasked questions? How do we, for instance, talk about cultural devaluation of girls? Or help them overcome the feelings of worthlessness and inferiority, bred, bolstered and supported by the popular versions of our myths? How can we disprove the prevalent thinking that "*for women, neither sacrifice, shraddhas, nor fasts are of any efficacy. By serving their husbands only can they win neaven?*"

And these are just a few of the cultural and in-the-blood issues. There are other ingrained ideas that dictate our lives. Yes, we are a traditional society, but can we overcome the limitations of such a society? Can we find meaning for our lives that will satisfy us in the present-day context? I believe that these ideas can only be attacked at the sub-conscious level. No amount of direct lectures or essays can touch the deep-seated inhibitions, fears and inadequacies that men and women in India, consciously or unconsciously are burdened with.

Over the last four years of working closely with children in rural and urban India, we in Katha realise that when people are not informed, they are unable to find the right solutions. Often, they don't even think they have a problem. Communication that uses the right language, the right understanding of the audience and their needs, leads to an awakening of awareness.

Education has been identified as "the corner stone of economic growth and social development and a principal means of improving the welfare of individuals." Yet, in India today, more than half the population of girls have never stepped into a school. Their education is in the hands of people who do not see the importance of schooling for girls--since "they are going to get married, anyway."

These problems cannot be wished away. The right information base has to be built up. In India, where the old has been superceded by the new, and not always for the best, what our people need to know is how to pick up the best from the old and the new and build up for themselves a lifestyle that is self- sustaining and environment friendly. The best place to start is with literacy, with children, boys and girls who do go to formal or nonformal school, and those who don't.

Today, we are moving into a world where the written word is gaining importance in India. But, we have done so little to increase the pool of quality writers for children. We need to set standards for ourselves. I feel it is the bounden duty of Government to

- institute Sahitya Akademi Awards for writers of children's books and translators of children's fiction from and into the many Indian languages;
- start and maintain more special libraries for rural and urban first-generation book readers, places that are well-lit, warm and welcoming.
- subsidize the cost of paper for children's books;
- encourage publishing of quality books and good bookshops for children; make effective some of the innovative schemes already in operation, like Operation Blackboard of the Government of India.

I feel that our people are not so ignorant that they do not want books; nor so poor that they will not pay a little to be able to read for pleasure. For various reasons, they have not been able to give importance to literacy or books till now. But things are changing. A new wind is blowing! And I am confident that India will move forward, because of the people themselves. Because all over the country there is excitement; there are nongovernmental organizations working towards the empowerment of the people. True power comes with having a voice. Voice comes with an informed base. Literacy. The children of today will have a voice. I only hope Katha will be able to play a small role in this!

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Division: Libraries Serving the General Public

Section/RT: Children's Libraries

89-CHILD-3-E

Joint Meeting with:

WORKSHOP THEME (IF APPLICABLE):

CHILDREN'S BOOKS & LIBRARIES
IN INDIA

MOHINI RAO

University of Hyderabad.
India

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stimated number of participants
the meeting:

Section of Children's Libraries
Program Meeting
Speakers and Abstracts

Title: Children's Books and Children's Libraries in India

Speaker: Mohini Rao

Abstract:

After Independence there was a general state of confusion in many things we did. If the vision of a brave new India was pulling us in one direction, the desire to preserve, cherish and assert our "Indianness" pulled us in another. This conflict was reflected in children's books too. While reflecting modern ideas and a scientific temper, authors seemed keen to preserve the old values and the spirit of Indian culture.

Publishing for children remains a peripheral activity for most publishers in India even today with some notable exceptions. Because India is a multilingual country, it is difficult to assess the overall development of children's literature. In a few languages like Bangla and Marathi, there is not only a general enthusiasm among parents, educationists, and young readers, but also a wide variety of well-illustrated and moderately priced books.

The efforts of the Children's Book Trust and governmental publishing agencies like the National Book Trust and the National Council of Educational Research and Training has been very significant in quality of publications as well as in pricing. Similiar efforts have not been generated among private publishers. It has been observed that in countries where mass media has preceded the printed word, a reading habit has been more difficult and slow to develop. It is necessary in a country like India therefore that mass media is used effectively to promote the reading habit. Children and children's books need to be taken more seriously. Books for children must be enjoyable but also give children a vision of a better world. Though the market is saturated with informative books, children still need the right kind of books, those that make them more secure and positive.

The job of those who are involved with children and books is to bring them together. All children including the poorest need books which keep their dreams and hopes alive.

CHILDREN'S BOOKS & LIBRARIES
IN INDIA
MOHINI RAO

The Present Status of Children's Books in India

When we talk of children's books we usually mean books read outside the classroom, books that children read of their own choice for pleasure or for information without compulsion or fear of examination. Most important of all, they can read them at their own pace, at their own will and with complete freedom.

Paul Hazard, the famous French scholar, in his book Books, Men and Children, described children's literature as "a part of the whole field of literature and art and not a separate field or inferior literature which is unworthy of serious attention of critics."

He asked children's books to be "faithful to the very essence of art in offering an intuitive, and direct way of knowledge bringing to children liberation, joy and happiness...... Books that share with them great emotions, building respect for life and, of course for man..... Books that contain morality and truth that are universal and everlasting."

According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, the first picture book for children was published by a Moravian publisher, Comenius in 1658. That book was used as a teaching device. He showed that reading material for children should be of special nature. But a century passed before children's literature was developed in a conscious and systematic way.

It was in the latter half of the 18th century that the child was finally recognized as a subject of special concern and serious thinking.

Children's literature developed slowly, its tempo varying from country to country and from language to language. In India by and large, authors depend a lot on the oral literature. Folk literature is the foundation of written literature. The old classics Panchatantra, Jatakas, Hitopadesha, etc. became the major sources of stories not only in India but in many other countries too. It is natural therefore that these stories have been told myriad times by myriad authors in all Indian languages.

More than half of children's books are retold versions of these stories which are very rich in variety, interesting, meaningful and imaginative. The treasure is inexhaustible.

In a country where creating and telling stories can be traced to such early times, the development of children's literature cannot be said to be remarkable. It's growth has been sporadic and uneven.

After India became independent in 1947, there was a rapid and almost complete reorientation of our thinking. New goals had to be set up. The political awakening was to be followed by cultural renaissance. The Indian identity became important. Indianness acquired new dimensions and significance. Even the educational system needed to be re-examined. The school textbooks had to be rewritten. The work was very vast and not easy. For replanning and publishing new textbooks the National Council of Educational Research and Training was set up by the Government. Today this organization, popularly known by its acronym N.C.E.R.T., has near monopoly of publishing textbooks as they are compulsory for all governmental aided schools. Private publishers could not afford to have such a research oriented set-up and make books available at moderate prices. As a result, they lost a good part of the business of publishing textbooks, which was very lucrative.

The rapid change in our values and priorities resulted in a conflict of ideas and ideals in many things we did. This was reflected in children's books too. On one hand there was the anxiety to assert our Indianness and national pride, make children feel proud of their country and their cultural heritage, while on the other hand, was the consciousness that advancement of scientific knowledge and creating a scientific temper were important if India was to be a part of the brave new world.

It is fascinating to look back now and think of the unbelievable spirit of activities in all spheres of life which swept through the country during early post-independence years.

The old classics were revived, with the awareness of the great treasure they had to offer. There was eagerness to project their old world values which ensured security and justice, the universal virtues of truth, love and compassion for fellow beings, the ultimate, victory of good over evil.

A new society was emerging under the influence of the liberated western thinking. Women, for instance, were given a new status. Their equal rights were being recognized. The laws were rewritten. A new emancipated Indian woman was emerging fast. It became important to project this 'new woman' in children's books too. Stories upholding the old image of the obsequious woman are rejected by the more enlightened people. It was, therefore, important to exercise discerning judgement in the selection of stories for retelling. They have to be relevant to the changing society. Balancing modernity, pragmatism, rational, scientific thinking and the old values and idealism was not easy.

In this rather uncertain state of things, children's literature had to take a back bench. Not much was being written and published which was of significance.

Children's Book Trust

The advent of the Children's Book Trust in the late fifties ushered in a new era for children's books. It was the late Shankar Pillai, the founder of the Children's Book Trust who gave children's books a new concept and importance. Within a short time from the establishment of the Trust, children's books became a subject for new thinking and discussion. The response Shankar received from the Government and the people was amazing. The country seemed to be waiting for something like this to happen. New talent was drawn from all directions. I had the good fortune of working with Shankar in the early formative years of the Children's Book Trust and shared with him the thrill and excitement of building up an institution which, even today, is the only one of its kind.

Of course, it must be mentioned that Shankar received maximum support from the Government of India as the then Prime Minister, Jawaharharlal Nehru, loved children and keenly felt the need for better produced children's books.

Shankar considered children the most important people in the society who deserved nothing but the best. He insisted on the aesthetics of the books. To him it was a crime to give children anything that was not beautiful or was indifferently put together. Shankar also realized the importance of skill development. He organized regular workshops and training courses for illustrators. Some of the young artists who received these workshops, are front ranking illustrators today.

More than anything else, Shankar put publishing of children's books on the map of Indiana Publishing. Some publishers tried to emulate the Children's Book Trust but could not sustain these efforts. There was, however, one major area which has been neglected by Children's Book Trust. It did not pay enough attention to building up children's writers in regional languages. C.B.T. publishe~~r~~s originally in English and then gets them translated into Indian languages.

The National Book Trust

With the launching of its very popular series Nehru Bal Pustakalaya (Nehru Library for Children), the National Book Trust, an autonomous organization under the Ministry of Human Resources Development, became another major publisher of children's books, perhaps the biggest in the country today. Besides publishing for all age-groups - from pre-school to 16 years - the Trust publishes each title in 13 languages. Most of the titles are first published in English and later translated into 12 Indian languages. Besides being well illustrated and well produced, the books are moderately priced as the Trust is a non-profit-making organization. The National Book Trust publications have filled a great void. Being both good and inexpensive, they are in great demand specially for bulk purchase by governmental departments and libraries.

Not withstanding their great achievements, both the Children's Book Trust and National Book Trust have been inadvertently enriching children's literature only in English. A major failure has been their inability to build up and encourage original writings in Indian languages. Translations do enrich a language, but its real development lies in original writings.

The National Book Trust also failed to generate healthy competition in the private sector. In fact, although quite unintentionally, it became a deterrent to private publishers as it was not possible for them to compete with the price-quality combination of NBT books.

Publishers' Problems

There are about 10000 publishers in India but only about 50 of them publish exclusively for children. For others publishing children's books is only a peripheral activity.

About 700 new titles for children are published every year in India in all languages together. This is very inadequate indeed, considering there are over half a million elementary schools and the total number of school-going children is about 95 million.

The development of book publishing depends on the progressive development of book reading habits. This has not developed in India for the following reasons:

1. high prices of books and low purchasing power of people
2. lack of book reading habits
3. high illiteracy rate
4. adult apathy
5. impact of television
6. inaccessibility of books and dearth of libraries
7. dearth of trained children's librarians

High Prices and Low Purchasing Power

Books, children's books in particular, are highly priced as the cost of color printing is high. In two languages, Bangla and Marathi, however, the scene is not so dismal. They have a developed reading habit, a wide market, and talented children's writers. Generally, if the books are to be priced as to be within the reach of people, publishers have to compromise the quality of paper, printing, illustrations, etc. Prices can be brought down if the first print run is high. But in the regional languages, specially in areas where the literacy rate is very low, books are printed in only small editions. Even in Hindi, which is spoken by the largest number of people, the usual print run of a new title is not more than 5000. And the lower the print run, the higher the cost and consequently the price. Publishers plead that the distribution cost is very high. Good art work is expensive. The result is indifferent and inadequate illustration. Even the humble and meek author asserts his rights today. Even good publishers cannot depend on individual buyers or sales through their retail outlets. For survival, most of them depend upon bulk purchase by libraries or government departments. They are concerned more with what would meet with their approval rather than instances of what would be appealing to children.

People's low purchasing power is another problem. They generally do not consider out of school books for the children very important. As it is, middle class families have to stretch their budget to meet the ever rising cost of living. Books which children read outside their school and which are not a part of the school syllabus, have usually no place in their parents' scheme of things. It is a luxury which they can ill afford and consider it unimportant. What should be the publishers' role under the circumstances? They can promote children's reading by better selection of books, authors and illustrators. They should try new areas, new interests and styles. The belief that anything is good enough for children, is not correct. Publishers can also join together in a book campaign and not be dependent on the government.

Low Literacy Rate, Undeveloped Reading Habits

In a country where the literacy rate is low, a book reading habit can not be expected to be developed. In India in the urban areas the percentage of literate people is 67.40% whereas in the rural areas it is only 29.55%. This percentage again is divided between all languages. The state of Kerala is the first to achieve 90% literacy. If people do not purchase books, it is partly because they can ill afford the price, but mostly because they are unaware of the importance and pleasure of reading.

Like all habits, a book-reading habit starts at home, Children who see important people in their life reading, who have an atmosphere in the house which is conducive to reading, develop an interest in books. But there has to be continual reinforcement and motivation.

Adult Apathy and Undeveloped Reading Habits

Adult apathy to book reading is the major cause that book reading habits have not developed in this country. In the report on the effective methods of promoting Reading Habits in Asia and the Pacific held in 1989 at Tokyo, it is recorded, ".... inspite of several differences most of the problems faced by the participating countries are common." One of the major problems is lack of parents' understanding, and insistence that reading anything other than textbooks is unnecessary. In order to make people understand the significance of reading for children, and to promote reading, co-operation from parents, people in the community including volunteers is essential.

Mothers are the first bridge between books and children.

Japan's Mothers and Child Reading Programmes.

A tip could be taken from Japan's very successful experiment in twenty minute mother and child Reading Programmes. A mother and child sit together for twenty minutes and the child reads a book to his mother. There is also a weekly reading hour in the family when each member reads out loud from a book of his choice. It was a very credible effort considering it was undertaken by voluntary agencies and individuals. A door-to-door campaign and talking personally and patiently to mothers at last yielded the desired result. Now mothers are so involved with what their children read that a children's librarian in Tokyo complained that they took too much interest!

Dearth of Libraries and Trained Children's Librarians

Outside homes it is librarians who are bridges not only between books and children but also between publishers and readers. Besides, as books are expensive and beyond the reach of most families, libraries have a very important role to play in developing reading habits. They are in the most advantageous position to give feedback to publishers. They can also guide children to good reading.

It is important to know the child's level before recommending a book to him. A librarian should know a child's reading needs. If children are given books far above their level they naturally reject them.

There are very few children's libraries with specially trained librarians, who can interact with children and make them feel free to ask questions. It is not just enough to display fresh arrivals. The librarian is expected to know something about them.

There are usually four types of children's libraries - (1) a special section in a public library, (2) exclusive libraries for children, (3) school libraries, and (4) neighborhood libraries. To those may be added home libraries, a recent movement started by the Association of Writers and Illustrators for Children. Mrs. Surekha Panandikar, Vice-President of the Association, will tell you more about them.

In Delhi, the Children's Book Trust Library is perhaps the best equipped. Not all schools, specially government and municipal schools, have libraries. They complain about lack of space and lack of time.

Most of the existing school libraries are not well equipped and look as forbidding as a classroom. Mrs. Vibha Parthasarathy, the principal of Sardar Patel Vidyalaya, one of the leading schools in the capital, and an eminent educationist, is in a better position to talk about school libraries.

Children, Television and the Communication Revolution

In the last two decades a communication revolution has swept through the developed countries and is coming fast to the developing ones. The speed at which information can be communicated today is so breathtaking that it has left the developing countries reeling under its impact.

India is a country of contrasts and extremes. People are at various stages of development. The very ancient and the very modern co-exit. The space age has taken over before the dark age has receded into history.

It is strange to talk about the impact of TV and other electronic media on books in a country where a good number of people living in remote areas, have never seen a book. Countries which have not yet achieved complete literacy are facing post-literacy problems. Countries which are yet to have an industrial revolution are already experiencing repercussions of the information and communication revolutions. In countries which are still struggling with their pre-industrial problems, the assimilation of new technology has thrown the society somewhat off balance.

We must analyze the slow development of literacy, and hence the reading habit, under these circumstances. In all this enthusiasm over gathering and communicating all kinds of information, we tend to forget that information is not knowledge. Knowledge is not instant. As John Naisbitt, the social forecaster said in his book Megatrends, "Children today are overfed on information but starved for knowledge." Today the book market is flooded with quiz books and the so-called informative books on all subjects under the sun. They pose questions which can be answered in monosyllables, 'yes' or 'no', or 'who, which and when.[4] Most of the information doled out to unsuspecting young readers is quite irrelevant to them.

In this information madness, the emotional element is forgotten. Children today are not only starved for knowledge, they are starved for emotions too. Children who have to cope with conflicting emotions, fear, anxiety and very often a sense of guilt, need the support of good literature specially created for them, to answer their questions and allay their fears. Books can give them the emotional support which TV and computers can not. Books talk directly to the reader. A child can read a book of his choice. He can turn back the pages. Books are windows to the world which a child can open at his will.

The all pervasive power of TV has captivated children of all ages. Experts on TV consider it a harbinger of a great future.

According to the report of the committee on the software on Doordarshan (governmental controlled Indian TV), "....the electronic media like the radio and TV have the potential of transcending the literacy barrier and therefore, also the class barrier. They made it possible for the nonliterature masses to have access to information and consequently the fruits of development without first crossing the literacy barrier. People belonging to the pre-industrial era, therefore, can take a leap into the post industrial era without passing through all stages through which the west had to pass."

But this leap can be dangerous. No society can accept ideas for which it is not ready. Fleeting images and words do not consolidate ideas or knowledge. They produce many contradictions, specially for children. They find it difficult to come to terms with instability and transience. They create doubts and confusion.

TV is often blamed for using children's time and attention, and their non-interest in reading. I blame the TV too - not for its magical power, but for not using that power wisely where children are concerned. The audio-visual media have a responsibility they should not ignore.

Today's children are children of the television age. Their lives are being shaped by the TV set at home. Their relationships, their attitudes and their reading preferences are all being shaped by the TV. They want action, excitement and nail biting suspense. Even their role models are taken from TV. The child is more at home with the characters he watches on the small screen with whom he derives vicarious experiences than with real people. They are less enquiring and although engulfed in a deluge of words from the TV box, they are less articulate.

To counter the undesirable effect of too much TV viewing, good books should be made available to children of all age groups. Parents, teachers, writers, librarians and others who are concerned with children and books have to meet the minds of children. It means not only to understand the environment and the society in which children are living but also their responses to them.

Government's Role in Book Promotion.

Apart from publishing their own books for children, the National Book Trust organizes a series of children's book fairs every year throughout the country. Book fairs provide great opportunities to children, their parents, librarians and teachers to see books in English, Hindi and the regional languages at the same place. These book fairs have contributed a lot to the promotion of books.

Operation Blackboard

The Ministry of Human Resources Development launched this scheme to help provide the half million primary schools within the country with basic equipment. A part of the fund was reserved for library books. But it was important to ensure that the funds were used in purchasing books which were good in all aspects - writing, illustrations, paper and printing. The States were asked to select books in their own regional languages. The National Book Trust was entrusted with the responsibility of preparing a list of recommended books in English and 12 Indian languages. As I was in charge of this project at the Trust, I had the opportunity of seeing thousand of titles published all over the country. For the first time an attempt has been made to set standards for children's books and it is hoped that this scheme will enthuse publishers to bring out better quality books.

Exploratory Scheme

Under this scheme the Trust offers financial assistance towards authors' royalty, art work and printing. The scheme has been started very recently and it is hoped to produce good results.

Reader's Club Movement

Under its school library service, the Trust has undertaken a pilot project of setting up Readers' Clubs in about 25 selected schools of the New Delhi Municipal Committee. The objectives include:

a) creating general awareness among teachers and children about books as a source of knowledge and enjoyment.

b) motivating the teachers, librarians and others concerned with school administration to encourage the use of libraries.

According to the Trust authorities, the response has been encouraging. Schools which complained of shortage of space were persuaded to convert their dust laden stores into attractive "Kitab Ghars" (Book Rooms). At last the books appear to have reached their young readers.

Good Books for Children

What are really good books for children?

In order to make them attractive to young readers, we must understand the kind of books that interest them. But that alone would not be advisable either. It would be like feeding children on chocolates and the junk food they love. We have to give them wholesome food which builds up their body and makes it healthy and strong and at the same time relished by them. The same is true about what we give them to read. An American writer for children, Phillis Whitney, suggested a compromise - "we should give them what we think they should read, but in a way they enjoy."

Naisbitt says, "To survive the computer and high-tech madness, we should develop our own "high-touch" systems." He recommends "opportunities to become involved with stimulating ideas and mind - stretching experiences - through reading." Hazard says about grown-ups, "....they have offered books which ooze boredom - that are likely to make them detest wisdom forever..... books which paralyze the spontaneous forces of the child's soul falling like hail in springtime." It is the job of those who love books and love children, to bring them together. Children live in the present. Every child, even the poorest of the poor, is an inheritor of the earth. He has a dream in his eyes and hope in his heart. It is our job to make the required effort to see that that dream does not die and anger does not take the place of hope, as they grow into adulthood. For, as Huck says, "When the doors are closed on hope one has left the realm of childhood." Children can not wait. There is no tomorrow for them. It is only today.

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IFLA General Conference / New Delhi 1992

Division: Libraries Serving the General Public
Section: Libraries for the Blind

ILLITERACY AND BLINDNESS

by

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WS Paper
Meeting No 141

Illiteracy and blindness

The retired farmer was signing a form in the village post-office. He drew it towards him, turned it through ninety degrees so that the heading lay on his right, and above the dotted line left for his signature (where the post-mistress's helpful forefinger lay) he drew a slow, careful, descending spiral. Then he pushed form and pen back across the counter, the formality complied with. Turned upright, the spiral was revealed as a beautiful copper-plate signature. It was the only writing he knew, and the contents of the form had been read to him by the keeper of the post-office. He was quite illiterate, yet this man had been a successful farmer: a noted judge of livestock and a good businessman. As the villagers put it, 'You'd have to get up early in the morning to catch him out'.

In another village the undisputed darts champion (darts is a game involving rapid mental arithmetic as well as a skilled hand and eye was unable to write his score on the black-board alongside the target, or even to read the metal figures on the target. His calculations were completely mental, he had memorised the layout of the board, and like the farmer, he was very rarely wrong.

These two illiterates lived in rural communities, and I knew them in the 1930s and 1940s, respectively. I was too young to have interrogated them about the reasons for their handicap - and had I asked a question in those terms I should probably have received a blow in return, for neither regarded himself as handicapped, and in those communities, at that time, they did not feel so.

Illiteracy carries no visible mark. Blindness almost always does, and it would have been rare, even sixty years ago, to find a blind person as confident in themselves and in the regard of their contemporaries as the old farmer. Rare, but not unknown:

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the playwright John Mortimer, in Voyage round my father portrayed a successful blind barrister whose family scarcely thought of him as blind. [Mortimer]

In the village communities of my childhood, blind people were usually in one of two categories: the old who sat where they were put, happy to talk to any visitor, and walking only with assistance, and those who walked with a stick, tapping their way along the road past obstacles. The latter were objects of amusement tinged with fear to the children - the opportunity to put something in their way was sometimes too tempting to resist, and the lifted stick with which we culprits were threatened was a real enough threat. Even without such childish misbehaviours, a blind man who used his remaining senses to navigate the village street, aided only by a (sometimes white) stick had an air of mystery about him, almost of menace. Robert Louis Stevenson made potent use of just a figure as Blind Pew in the wonderfully uneasy opening of Treasure Island. [STEVENSON]

Illiteracy, according to my dictionary, means an inability to read and write (although the word is often used to condemn writing of a poor standard). In these terms the loss of sight renders the most highly educated and skilled communicator functionally illiterate. Many of us have experienced one aspect of this in visiting a foreign country: IFLA delegates lost on the Moscow underground last year were demonstrations of a degree of functional illiteracy! All the services whose representatives make up the Section of Libraries for the Blind are committed to the restoration of the benefits of literacy, through whatever medium is best, to as many visually handicapped people as possible.

This paper is concerned with blindness and illiteracy, but not with their incidence, treatment, or geographical distribution. Its focus is on two things essential to all human life: esteem and self-esteem. It looks at what either handicap

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does to society's ideas about its members with either condition, and how those members feel about themselves and about society.

Evidence is largely anecdotal: these are attitudes and reactions not surveyed by opinion polls, and if they were, who would decide which answers were 'normal' and how many respondents would answer the questions truthfully? I believe our attitudes to both illiteracy and blindness to be unthinking - almost instinctive - and in the case of blindness to survive from very early stages of human society. Blindness occurs in the legends of near-primitive society in two principal connections: either the gods deprive someone of sight as a punishment, or a blind person is regarded as having a wisdom beyond that of sighted people. Today these beliefs survive in many places and in unthinking reactions. The blind are credited with special powers 'as a compensation for their loss of sight' - this was said to me by a normal intelligent person only days before I sat down to write this. And blindness as a punishment? I find this as a reaction principally among the adventitious blind, often turned to good effect when their anger at loss of sight is channelled into making new opportunities of progress for themselves and their fellow-victims.

Attitudes to illiteracy do not begin so early, because it was the norm for centuries - the person who could read and write was the exception, and was employed by the remainder of society. Only with more nearly universal education did illiteracy become a recognisable condition, and even then the illiterate could pass off his inability by saying he (or she) 'never had any schooling' - often adding that work had taken up all his time from a very early age. This was often true, and sometimes still is.

An individual learns his ideas of a 'standard' identity from his society and applies them to himself, even if he is unable to conform to them. Western societies take as norms the possession of sight and a high degree of literacy. Daily life, from food

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shopping to international travel, takes these abilities for granted.

The self-esteem of the illiterate is most hurt by an inability to do what others do, whether this is reading the local newspaper or sending a post-card home when on holiday. They have no visible handicap, but know that the rest of society - us - will despise them if they are seen to be unable to read or write. They adopt many subterfuges to gain advantages we all take for granted. When a new mobile library service opened in one rural district it quickly became an important social meeting-place in small communities. One lady collected a membership form from the vehicle, waving aside suggestions that she completed it then and there with 'I can't stop now', and returned it duly completed at the next visit. She was shown the arrangement of the stock, and said, 'I really like gardening books with lots of pictures.' She borrowed two, and became a very regular user. Since her own garden was the kind one sees reproduced on colourful calendars, her taste was easily understood, but it was local gossip which told the library staff that Miss X wanted pictures because she could not read. It is to their credit that they always made sure there were one or two new titles for her at every visit. Who had completed her form for her they never asked..

An individual limited by either handicap acquires skills in presenting himself as a normal member of society in all but his abnormality. He is counselled not to over-react and pretend that his limitation is non-existent, and learns at the same time the skills he needs to deal with the 'normal' people he meets.

We know how to help a blind person - with tact, unobtrusively, and to the degree that he wishes to be helped. (We may still make jokes at the expense of the partially-illiterate, but we 'mean no harm'.) The handicapped individual, especially if he has lived many years with his handicap, may well be applying far more tact and delicacy to

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managing us and our reactions to him. Often he may refer to his own disability in a way which shows himself able to react as a full member of society: to appreciate the problem he sets us, while delicately ignoring the difficulties we present to him. A handicapped individual is familiar with the relief and warmth of reaction which follows his acceptance of a tentative offer of help.

The 'normal' person is often embarrassed by illiteracy, and passes it off with a would-be joke about his own spelling not being too good. He also makes assumptions about those with a handicap which are totally illogical: he may almost lift a blind man into a chair; talking to an illiterate he will try to use very simple words, or speak very loudly, and he will ask someone else present if a cripple takes sugar in his tea. He will, in fact, often act as though a single disability were the sum of all disabilities.

This strange behaviour (which is widespread enough for the British Broadcasting Corporation to make a joke of it in the title of their weekly programme for handicapped people and those who work with them - *Does he take sugar?*) is the converse of the attribution of special qualities. We expect the handicapped to have made some philosophical or religious adjustment in order to compensate for their deprivation. As one of them wrote: 'You develop a 'philosophy'. People seem to insist that you have one and they think you're kidding when you say you haven't. So you do your best to please and to strangers... who want to know what keeps you going, you give your little piece. You're a man of unusual discernment if you can realise that your philosophy is seldom one of your own devising, but a reflection of the world's notions about blindness.' [CHEVIGNY]

Hector Chevigny, the writer just quoted, wrote elsewhere, 'The problems of personality among those who cannot see do not differ in kind from those to be encountered in the generality of

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human experience.' (CHEVIGNY and BRAVERMAN, quoted in LENDE) The greater problem is in the reactions to handicap of the 'normal' person.

In Britain a national campaign to assist the adult illiterate was launched in the 1960s, and met with considerable success once it was discovered that one-to-one teaching could very often achieve what the class-room could not. The reason was quickly obvious: many of us are not prepared to admit our difficulties and inadequacies in public, but where there is no obvious comparison with others we can often learn what had seemed impossible: the classroom can be a cruel place. (As a note, I speak from experience, having found telling the time difficult as a small boy. I was made fun of, and naturally shut my mind and ears to talk of the subject. A little later, inconvenienced by not knowing what time it was, a few minutes' thought away from colleagues and family explained the clock-face readily enough.)

One young man attended the literacy class with strictly limited ambitions: he wanted to be able to read the sports page of the newspaper and write to his mother when he was away. He knew he wasn't very intelligent - that had been brought home to him often enough - but he wanted to be more like his contemporaries. My wife was his tutor, and he cost her hours of patient work. The following summer a post-card arrived from Blackpool - it was from Ian. It was not well-written or elegant, but it had come through the postal service successfully, as had others to his family. As an achievement for Ian it was equivalent to an Olympic medal, and he appreciated it. When next we met him he was smartly dressed and immeasurably more confident. He had felt illiteracy to mark him as in some way inferior, and now he was the equal of those about him. One feared that life would still have some blows in store for Ian, but the contribution his new skill made to his self-esteem was happily obvious.

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Many 'advanced' societies today value literacy less than they did. Applicants for important posts and public office feel no shame in a degree of illiteracy, even at times refer to it with satisfaction as giving them a 'common touch' with the man and woman in the street. The aim of a full and accurate command of language is described (even by many educationists) as 'elitist'. The conflict of this view with the target of universal literacy supported by the U.N.O. and most individual nations seems to escape notice. An apt comment seems to be Kenneth Jernigan's 'I am of that group which deplores the illiteracy which characterises much of our society and distinguishes many of its would-be leaders'. [JERNIGAN] Mr. Jernigan has been blind from birth.

In my own country there is an argument linking my two concerns today: should beginners (especially young children) first be taught the uncontracted form of braille (i.e. when each letter is represented by one braille sign) or should contracted braille (when a group of letters or a complete word is shown by one sign) be taught from the outset. Contracted braille does not teach correct spelling of many common words, so is seen by some as inducing partial illiteracy. (Although modern braille-to-print computer devices allow the braillist to produce a correct plain-language document even though they write contracted braille.)

Erving Goffman, clearest and most stimulating of sociologists, described the handicapped - indeed all who were clearly 'different' - as being stigmatised, and went on to examine how individuals felt about their stigmata. The word is perhaps one we should prefer to avoid, but the idea is simple enough. We all know people with some form of handicap who regard their difference as a mark of distinction and seek out others with the same difference from the norm. Goffman quotes a blind girl who says, 'I could respect a blind man for his own qualities and be glad for the understanding he could give to me.' This suggests a mutually supportive but inward-looking alignment among those with a particular disability. She continues, however 'Some of my friends are sighted and some are blind. This... seems to me the way it ought to be.' [GOFFMAN]

This surely is 'the way it ought to be'. As a newcomer to work with visually-handicapped people I often met the phrase 'the world of the blind', and from the first have hated it. If the blind, the illiterate, or those with any difference from the average human being feel any need for such a concept, then they are demonstrating the weaknesses in society's openness to them.

Naturally, people with like abilities or disabilities share common interests, but the esteem in which we all hold each other must always reflect basic human qualities, not accidental difference. Then, and only then, those whom society limits because of their illiteracy or lack of sight may be able to esteem themselves justly and to feel properly-esteemed members of the human race.

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GUIDELINES FOR PUBLIC LIBRARIES WORKING WITH ILLITERACY

Prepared by Barbro Thomas for the
International Federation of Library
Associations and Institutions (IFLA)
under contract with UNESCO

Stockholm, August 1992

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1. INTRODUCTION

In 1987 the United Nations decided to declare 1990 International Literacy Year. UNESCO was invited to assume the role of lead organization for the preparation and observance of the year. The objectives for the International Literacy Year were approved by the twenty-fourth session of the UNESCO General Conference in 1987 (appendix 1).

Illiteracy has been considered a problem first and foremost for the third world, but in the preparatory work for this "year" UNESCO also focused on functional illiteracy. By so doing the Literacy Year became of global importance and a hidden problem was made visible.

IFLA´s sections for Public Libraries and for School Libraries have actively supported UNESCO´s goal. At the world Conference on "Education for All" in Thailand (March 1990) the chairperson of the Section of School Libraries pointed out in a convincing way the role of libraries as vital links in providing educational resources.

In 1985, the Section of Public Libraries within IFLA formed a working group to review the involvement of libraries in literacy matters around the world and to plan a seminar to address this issue.

This pre-conference seminar entitled "Public Libraries Against Illiteracy" was held in Paris/Massy, August 15-19, 1989. The base programme of the seminar was formulated and designed with four goals in mind:

- to bring together information on public library efforts against illiteracy around the world,

- to provide an opportunity for the participants to share experiences in the field with colleagues from other countries,

- to explore ways in which more public library activities can be planned to expand illiteracy projects,

- to develop series of resolutions for action by IFLA to ensure the future growth of public library efforts in the struggle against illiteracy.

Linked to the IFLA Conference in Stockholm 1990 the Section of Public Libraries organized a half day seminar devoted to the same topic.

In connection with the 1990 General Conference a pre-conference seminar on "Public Library Policy" was held in Härnösand, August 13-17. Librarians from the Third World were invited to the seminar where the question of illiteracy played an important role. Resolutions from the seminar included some very precise advice for the Section of Public Libraries to add to their agenda.

In preparing and establishing guidelines for libraries working with illiteracy the discussions, papers, proposals and resolutions from the seminars mentioned above have formed the basis for this report.

The International Literacy Year has passed but libraries should continue this work. We hope that these guidelines will be of help and practical value.

2. DEFINITIONS

2.1 The concepts of literacy and illiteracy

The terms literacy and illiteracy are used with various connotations. However there are definitions of the concept in standard international documents. In 1958 UNESCO proposed that a person is illiterate who "cannot with understanding both read and write a short simple statement on his everyday life." This definition of traditional illiteracy was stated in the Revised Recommendation concerning the International Standardization of Educational Statistics and adopted by UNESCO's General Conference in 1978. According to this recommendation "a person is literate who can with understanding both read and write a short simple statement on his everyday life".

Although alternative definitions have been discussed and suggested there has been no success in finding a briefer and better definition of the concept.

The terms illiteracy/literacy are very often used in connection with certain conditions, for instance:

- traditional mass illiteracy,

- functional illiteracy/literacy,
- semi-literacy (those who leave school after a short time),
- instrumental illiteracy (adults who have never attended school),
- linguistic illiteracy (immigrants not literate in the host country language),
- new literates (those who have just obtained a reading skill),
- information illiteracy is a rather new expression to define those unable to use the information offered in a technological society.

In the following we will concentrate on the concepts "basic illiteracy" or "traditional mass illiteracy", "functional illiteracy/literacy" and the "new literates".

2.2 Basic illiteracy/traditional mass illiteracy

According to UNESCO's latest estimate in 1990 there were 948.1 million illiterates aged over 15 in the world. That is, 26.5 per cent of the total population. The number of illiterates in developed countries was in 1990 estimated at 31.5 million or less than 5 per cent of the population above 15 years of age. The remaining 916.6 million illiterates are to be found in the Third World countries representing 34.9 per cent of the adult population.

The number of illiterates grew by approximately 59 million between 1970 and 1985. Since 1985, the number has remained stable. The stability in the number of illiterates means a decrease of illiteracy rate: 38.5 per cent in 1970, 26.5 per cent in 1990 and - by extrapolation - 21.8 per cent in 2 000.

(Compendium of statistics on illiteracy - 1990 Edition. Unesco 1990.)

Of course the illiteracy rates differ between Third World countries, between regions, between cities and rural areas, between groups of the population and above all between men and women.

In general the background factor is poverty. Very often there is a vicious circle of poverty:

- lack of primary education,

- illiteracy,

- poverty.

Basic illiteracy exists above all in the developing countries and has to be fought in primarily by more resources on primary education.

2.3 Functional illiteracy

The concept of functional illiteracy is comparatively new. It is not easy to draw a very clear line between traditional illiteracy, as defined in UNESCO´s Revised Recommendation, and functional illiteracy which refers to the level of literacy which is needed in a complex industrialized society.

According to UNESCO´s recommendation a person is functionally illiterate who "cannot take part in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his group and community and also for enabling him to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his own and the community´s development".

The concept of functional illiteracy is not absolute. It depends on the level of the society. A person can be considered functionally literate in one society but not in another depending on what skills are needed for "effective functioning".

It is clear that the rapid technical development of modern society will create an increasing number of functional illiterates.

Functional illiteracy is mainly a problem for the Western industrialized countries. But of course it will also be found in the developing countries.

It is difficult to estimate the total number of functional illiterates.
It is to a very large extent a hidden problem.

During the 1980s a large number of investigations in Europe and the USA have proved that quite a high per cent of the population should be considered as functional illiterates. Some reports have proved that up to 10 per cent of the population should be considered in this category. There are men and women in Europe and in the USA who cannot understand a job advertisement, a train timetable, a pay slip etc.

While the illiteracy rates show a decreasing figure during the last 50 years, the total number of functional illiterates seems to be increasing.

Even if functional illiteracy might be considered a marginal problem it is relatively significant. As functional illiteracy is often very much connected with shame it is often a hidden problem and not very easy to deal with. Public libraries could be much more aware of this matter.

2.4 New literates

A new literate is a person who has just obtained the reading skill through adult education programmes. It might also include children leaving primary education.

There are great risks that these groups very soon will relapse into illiteracy. Special attention should therefore be paid as how to help the new literates remain literate.

The eradication of traditional mass illiteracy is a question of formal and non formal mass education. To keep the new literates literate is very much a question of provision of adequate reading material. Here the public library can play a very important role.

3. THE ROLE OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY IN ERADICATING ILLITERACY

3.1 The concept of public-libraries

Ever since their founding as educational and cultural community resources, public libraries have dispensed the printed word and promoted greater use of the print and non-print materials they offer. It is readily agreed by educators and librarians alike that illiteracy is a community-wide problem of great social and political concern, and as such needs to be addressed on a joint and co-operative basis. Nonetheless, each and every community and governmental organization can have an individual and critical impact on the total solution to this problem.

Working in a multifaceted environment in providing educational, information and cultural materials to people of all ages, the public library becomes a natural bridge in linking literacy and reading at all levels of achievement.

Recognizing public libraries as key factors in resolving the issue of illiteracy is crucial to the success of any community-wide literacy programme. For libraries to have a meaningful impact in this effort, educators, social workers and librarians themselves must understand the various roles each play, and work together in a partnership to help improve literacy levels.

As public libraries approach the issue of their role in the literacy campaign they must first determine the scope of the problem and their contribution to a solution.

Of importance are not only the normal parameters of basic illiteracy and functional illiteracy, but also the different sub-groups, new literates, the aliterates, i.e those who are capable of reading, but choose not to do so.

Immigration and the problem of illiteracy in connection with rural-urban migration should also be taken under consideration.

3.2 Necessary conditions for success

First of all it is important to define the problem and establish very clear objectives for future action. It should also be considered with which institutions/organizations it might be necessary to co-operate in order to succeed.It should also be stressed that:

- libraries must have a conscious approach to the problem,

- libraries must develop channels of information which is working in such a way that it reaches those to whom it is aimed in an effective and worthwhile form,

- library employees must increase their knowledge of the subject, and the task of relieving illiteracy,

- libraries must give more thought as to how material is to be presented to the public,

- libraries must fight against the lack of reading materials, lack of books and lack of special materials for different target groups,

- libraries must become visible in working with the general public and with various institutions/organizations in order to achieve significant success in this field.

4. INTERNATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR PUBLIC LIBRARIES INVOLVED IN LITERACY WORK

Since needs and resources vary so widely there can be no common standards or guidelines. Therefore in the following section the intention is to offer advice based on experiences drawn from many countries, giving good examples to be applied. We hope that they will be a useful tool for libraries concerned with the provision of literacy.

The main problem establishing guidelines for libraries combating illiteracy is of course the tremendous gap between the Third World countries with a high rate of basic illiteracy and the industrialized countries with various rates of functional illiteracy and lower, but various, rates of basic illiteracy. Library resources, the surplus of books and reading materials are concentrated to the industrial world. Generally speaking libraries that face the extreme rates of basic illiteracy also face a lack of books and reading materials and also suffer from low library standards.

Reservations should be made in the very beginning that some of the examples given might not at all be applicable or relevant for some libraries. On the other hand we believe that the advice has relevance for future development.

Most complications arise in the chapter dealing with selection of materials. And it might seem derisive to libraries facing the fact that there is not very much material to select.

However, the guidelines will suggest what might be possible, but national/local conditions will dictate what is feasible. We must keep in mind the gap between what is desirable and what is possible.

5. UNESCO PUBLIC LIBRARY MANIFESTO (rev. 1972) (appendix 2)

The UNESCO Public Library Manifesto identifies in broad terms the objectives of public libraries:

- to contribute to lifelong universal education,

-to facilitate appreciation of the achievement of humanity in knowledge and culture,

- to be the principal means whereby the record of man's thoughts and ideas, and the expression of his creative imagination, are made freely available to all,

- to refresh the human spirit by the provision of books and other media for relaxation and pleasure,

- to assist students,

- to provide up-to-date technical, scientific and sociological information.

The UNESCO Public Library Manifesto was last revised in 1972. No evaluation of the impact of the Manifesto has been undertaken, but it probably has no doubt played an important role in the promotion and development of public libraries. Much remains, however, to be done.

5.1 Recommendations from the Härnösand seminar

One of the recommendations (appendix 3) adopted at the Härnösand seminar was addressed to IFLA "to review and update the UNESCO Public Library Manifesto (1972) in order to enable Public Libraries to cope with the information needs of the modern society". In order to implement this recommendation IFLA was urged to organize regional workshops to help re-define the role of public libraries and the profile of the public librarian in developed countries.

It was also declared that there are still areas in the field of public librarianship and education that should be taken into consideration, such as social communication, techniques, the role of the librarian in literacy and postliteracy campaigns.

In order to cater adequately for these areas it was suggested that more seminars, workshops and conferences be organized annually in the different regions for librarians in the framework of the new Medium-Term Programme of IFLA.

As a follow-up of the Massy pre-conference 1989 it was recommended that workshops be held in the different regions in the developing countries to exchange information.

5.2 To revise the Manifesto

Since 1972, when the UNESCO Public Library Manifesto was revised, changes have taken place in society in developing as well as in developed countries.

The Manifesto in its present form does not explicitly stress the role of the public library in eradicating illiteracy. It is considered of great importance that a revision on that point is undertaken. For the Section of Public Libraries within IFLA one of the most important tasks within the next Medium Term Programme period 1992-97 will be to suggest a revision of the Public Library Manifesto including stressing the illiteracy problem.

6. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Public libraries acquire, store and disseminate books and other printed or non-print materials.

Public Libraries must be concerned that they serve the entire community and must be ever vigilant that their use is as barrier-free as possible. Since illiteracy is a major barrier to such use, librarians must do their part to help eliminate this stigma.

Although not the only actor in the struggle against illiteracy, the library does have an important role to play in co-operation with all other organizations who are on the front line of this battle. The library must take its responsibility seriously and do everything in its power to ensure that the goal of a totally literate world is achieved.

Although the starting point is tremendously different for the public library in the highly industrialized country and in the developing country the aim is the same even if the course of action will vary widely.

7. CONDITIONS

Public libraries operate in various conditions concerning resources, professional staff, buildings, library materials or lack of materials, reading traditions, general education etc.

To promote literacy is of course a very different task for public libraries in developing countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America against industrialized countries in Europe, Japan, USA, Canada or Australia.

In the developing countries including Africa south of the Sahara, the Arab States, Latin America and Caribbean, East Asia and South Asia the problem of basic illiteracy is heavy. The average illiteracy rate is estimated at 34.9 per cent.

In 1990 it was estimated that in developing countries women accounted for 45 per cent of the illiterate population and men for 25 per cent.

The illiteracy rates are in general higher in rural areas than in cities. In the cities illiteracy is higher in the slum and in marginal areas. The growing number of street children is a serious problem. In general most illiterate people are to be found among the poorest.

In the developing countries the efforts to eradicate/combat illiteracy has to to be performed facing some or all of following conditions:

- school age children not attending school due to limited educational facilities and resources,

- high drop out rates among school children and adults attending adult education programmes,

- lack of expansion of formal and non-formal educational activities,

- new literates relapsing into illiteracy due to irrelevant curricula, lack of trainers, lack of reading materials for follow up,

- scarcity of affordable literature,

- lack of adequate library service,

- lack of reading habit,

- inadequate funding to train enough personnel and develop relevant curricula etc,

- duplication of efforts, due to the fact that the responsibility is scattered among several governmental and non-governmental bodies and not co-ordinated on a permanent basis by a suitable structure,

- lack of skill in management of resources,

- need for even young children to be required to work in order to meet basic economic needs.

In the developed countries conditions are fundamentally different. The compulsory school system has a long tradition. Compulsory basic education now lasts for about 9 years. Generally speaking there is a high level of education.

There is also a high level of industrialization. The standard of living is good. The society demands a high degree of reading proficiency in order to meet basic everyday needs. Books are no longer scarcities but rather surplus goods. Public libraries have a long tradition and have reached a comparatively high level of standard and service.

Illiteracy exists even if it should not but is to a great extent a hidden problem. As is true elsewhere illiteracy affects the most underprivileged groups. Functional illiteracy might be the most serious problem that, if not solved, could in the long run be disastrous for daily life in developed countries. There is in general a growing awareness of the problem of functional illiteracy.

As illiteracy tends to be regarded in practice as having been almost eradicated, the public libraries' degree of involvement in this particular field has in the past been slight. The alarming reports received during the past few years that a not inconsiderable number of young people are leaving school without being able to read and write, have, however, encouraged libraries to involve themselves in these problems.

Even though insight into these problems has increased, it is nevertheless unlikely that libraries will come to play a decisive role in the task of relieving functional illiteracy but they should be able to play a far more active role than they have done up to now.

In that case libraries must not work in isolation but must set up forms of co-operation with various bodies such as:

- schools and adult education,

- study organizations,

- local groups and societies,

- mass media such as local radio stations, local press and TV.

Whatever the conditions, public libraries should

- not deny the problem of illiteracy, but try to identify the problem and the extent of it,

- make the public library visible,

- be aware that library service to illiterates and new literates is not a service in demand and the library has to play an active role in encouraging its use,

- actively initiate cooperation with other institutions/organizations in the field,

- promote the production of reading material suitable for illiterates and new literates,

8. THE BOOK FAMINE

8.1 Necessary but not sufficient condition - books

Today, in Western European countries, in the USA, Canada and other highly industrialized areas, books are no longer scarcities but surplus goods. While, in general, Third World countries suffer from acute book shortages.

In the industrialized world reading skills might be threatened by the increasing entertainment industry distributed for example by the surplus of television channels and an increasing number of electronic media. In the developing world there is an evident connection between lack of books and illiteracy.

Public libraries can play an important role by providing books free of charge in a community with a surplus of books but also over-provided with light entertainment as well as in the community suffering from an acute lack of reading material.

In order to eradicate illiteracy it is necessary to provide books and other reading material. Most urgent is the question of how to improve book provision in areas with a serious shortage of books.

The lack of books and reading materials might be due to

- books not classed as priorities in competition with necessities such as food, clothing, medicine etc.,

- shortage of foreign currency,
- import taxation on books,
- cost of transportation of books,
- lack of interest or skills in indigenous publishing,
- excessive bureaucracy,
- lack of infrastructure in library buildings and supplies,
- political or religious censorship.

8.2 Book donation programmes

There are a number of book donation programmes where the main stream goes from the industrialized part of the world to libraries in the Third World. Recently new book donation programmes have been established to deliver surplus books to libraries and other institutions in Eastern Europe.

The book donation services collect new or used books and send collections to needy libraries. In general no co-ordination exists, not even nationally, between different book donation programmes.There is a risk that the stream of books will be arbitrary and that some countries will "fall between two stools". The cost of transportation of unwanted material can be an obstructive factor even when material can be made available from the the port of embarkation.

Books donated are mainly in English or French which means that book donations are of limited use, when the need is for other languages, nor do the programmes help to build up collections in native languages. The content of the books published for the industrialized countries might not always be appropriate for readers in the Third World.

Even if there are frustrating elements book donations on the whole are ways of giving practical help to libraries suffering from a serious lack of material.

To avoid distribution of useless material very close contact should be established between donor organizations and the receiving institutions.

The ideal situation is for each receiving library to preselect material. If this is impossible receiving libraries should give very precise advice to donors as to what material would be suitable and what would definitely not.

Donors should learn about the circumstances in the receiving countries. Book donations should not replace acquisitions but donation of surplus material could play an important role in providing urgent aid.

Libraries could, by co-operation, achieve a better balance by organizing distribution of the surplus books to areas where most needed. This could be done by establishing book donation programmes or by twinning between libraries.

- Book donations should be adequate to the receiving library.

- Ideally, libraries should be able to preselect donated material.

- Very close co-operation must be established between the donating organization and the receiving library.

- Guidelines should be established to avoid frustration or misunderstandings.

8.3 Taxation

Taxation might in some third world countries be an effective obstacle to receiving printed material from abroad, whether donated or purchased.

In order to facilitate the exchange of publications, objects of artistic and scientific interest and other materials of information and to recommend international agreements which should promote the free flow of ideas, UNESCO sponsored the "Florence agreement and its Protocol".

The major purpose of the Agreement and the Protocol is to make it easier to import educational, scientific and cultural materials. They reduce tariff, tax, currency and trade obstacles, permitting organizations and individuals to obtain them from abroad with less cost.

Negotiations with relevant ministries and custom authorities might have been undertaken by the library but without success. It might still happen that libraries cannot afford to clear their goods which are then returned to the donor or end up at the customs large rummage sales.

- The taxation on outside donations should be carefully examined.

- Donations should not have to be refused if taxation costs appear high.

- Donors should be careful not to estimate the value of second-hand books too highly in their own hard currency which might raise the tax unnecessarily.

- Obstacles such as taxation should as far as possible be removed in order to support literacy.

- Public libraries should acquire information about the present status of the Florence Agreement and if needed organize promotion of the agreements to the Ministry in charge.

8.4 Indigenous publishing/Local publication

Publishing of indigenous literature should be encouraged. Because of the limited number of books published in developing countries imported materials might outnumber local publications.

- Locally produced books should be given preference in public libraries as local literature contains the whole genre of traditional and contemporary writings. It is recognized, though, that certain subjects may not be adequately provided in ethnic languages.

- Library promotion of local writing and publishing should be encouraged.

8.5 Good housekeeping

In countries where libraries suffer from an acute lack of books due to the conditions mentioned above it is of special importance that the books in stock are well looked after.

To keep the books as long as possible repair units could be set up. Staff should be trained to handle everyday repairs. If possible it would also be wise to try to set up a book binding unit. Shortage of materials and insufficient binding skills might be an obstacle to repairing the books before their condition deteriorates further.

The provision of repairing materials is often inexpensive and most useful.

International development agencies should be made aware of the fact that a very small amount of money could help tremendously.

9. COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

One of the public library´s most critical contributions to the literacy effort is the support it provides through its material in both print and non-print formats. These materials, whether reference or circulating, should be based and selected on the type and extent of illiteracy experienced within the community, as well as on the needs of those individuals working with local illiteracy programmes.

Although most books acquired in the normal selection process span a wide range of reading levels and are suitable for use in literacy training, special care should be taken to purchase items that are specifically produced to enhance the advancement of literacy. In particular the needs of adult learners should be recognized and encouragement given to material of interest within an adult context.

9.1 Books

Books are the basic material kept in libraries. The book collection in the public library should meet all kinds of needs of the users, for education, information or recreation. It is important that the collection reflects the special needs of reading materials for the poor reader.

Special attention should be given to the book needs of local organizations working in the literacy area. Deposit collections of certain types of material should be established and offered to support literacy training in such organizations. The library must be prepared to refurbish and refresh the deposit collection on some regular basis.

The public library should also try to develop a support collection of illiteracy teaching aids and make these items available to the volunteer tutors who participate in the community´s literacy programmes.

If the public library wishes to participate in the promotion of literacy attention must be paid to the need of relevant material.

There might be a gap between what is desirable and what is possible but whatever the conditions libraries must try to develop a book collection that reflects the special needs of the illiterate population. Literacy should not be a condition for benefiting from the public library.

9.2 Other material

As library collections have developed over the years, so has the diversity of materials being acquired. Public libraries should actively seek to purchase non-print items in both audio and video formats which can play an active part in literacy programmes.

The national book production might not always pay too much attention to the needs of the illiterate population whether basic, functional or new literates. Public libraries should therefore call attention to the lack of relevant books and encourage publishing of suitable material. But libraries must also find alternatives or complements.

The library should analyse what material could be attractive to poor readers, and what material could be relevant as an alternative to books as a bridge in the reading process.

Would a good collection of magazines be attractive? What about newspapers? Would a supply of many copies of the local/rural newspaper be relevant in literacy work? For example, local events could have an immediacy which would attract some readers.

A collection of cassette books/talking books would probably be of interest for the non-reader specially if connected to books so that whilst listening the book can be studied at the same time and reading skills thereby enhanced.

The use of videocassettes could be an entrance ticket to reading besides being a means in itself for information, education and recreation. Computers and computer programmes might attract children and young adults, and help create a future reading habit. Collection development in order to find relevant material could also be performed by supporting indigenous/local publishing.

The provision of TV and radio equipment should also be considered a possibility in literacy work.

Would a good collection of comics attract adults as well as children? Care must be taken to achieve the aim of increasing literacy by individual readers.

Decisions must be made in each library as to how much of the annual book fund should be used for material relevant in literacy work.

9.3 Selection of special reading material

The library collection of special reading material will of course be limited by what is obtainable..

The supply of special reading material will show tremendous variations not only between Third World countries versus the industrialized countries but also between minority languages countries and the English speaking part of the world. Nevertheless some special reading material will be suggested as relevant for public libraries involved in the efforts to promote literacy.

9.3.1 Easy-to-read books

Easy-to-read books can be written directly for people with reading difficulties. They can also be retold in an easier language. The text should be of literary and artistic quality and at the same time clear and comprehensible to the reader. And of course the easy reader should look attractive with a good choice of titles.

This is what is desirable but it is recognized that the provision of easy readers varies between different countries.

When there is a supply of easy-to-read books public libraries should develop a collection. This collection should be kept together in order to facilitate use as well as being visible to the customer. Public libraries could also encourage publishing of easy-to-read material.

9.3.2 Talking books or cassette books

Talking books and cassette books are books recorded from a printed version. Talking books are usually produced to give the blind and other handicapped readers access to literature. Very often there are legal restrictions about who will be permitted to use them.

Cassette books are also recorded from a printed version but on a commercial basis. There is a growing number of cassette books on the market.

Normally there are no restrictions about who should be permitted to use the cassette book, although there may well be restrictions on the subsequent home copying of commercial cassettes.

The collection could include talking books, talking periodicals and talking newspapers, indeed any sound recordings of a printed text.

The production of talking books and other sound recorded material also differs widely.

National legislation might regulate the public use of some recordings. In some countries the use of talking books is limited to certain groups, i.e. the blind and to people with other reading handicaps.

Due to local conditions the public library should develop a collection of talking books and other sound recorded material. This collection should be actively used to reach the illiterate population.

Attention should also be paid to the needs of the immigrant population to get talking books in their native language.

9.3.3 Childrens books

From the long term aspect of seeking to eradicate illiteracy children may be considered the most important target group. High priority should therefore be given to the development of the collection of books for children.

In the industrialized countries the supply of childrens books is good. The size and quality of the collection of childrens books is very much a question of priorities.

The book collection for children should contain fiction and non-fiction. Easy-to-read books should also be available.

The collection of childrens books should be refurbished and refreshed regularly as circulation rates might be much higher than for the adult collection.

It is important that the annual acquisition policy reflects the needs of children at individual libraries and the demographic growth patterns within library catchment areas.

9.3.4 Books in minority languages

The library should be aware of the different reading levels which might be seen within a specific linguistic group, for example refugees and immigrants.

Immigrants could come from countries with a high illiteracy rate composed with the indigenous population. It might also be the case that immigrant groups have obtained a high reading skill in their native language but in the new surroundings will be considered illiterate.

Sometimes basic literacy training in their own language will prove necessary before passing to be trained in the new language. Literate groups will be taught the new language at a higher level but will in general still appreciate reading materials in their mother tongue to keep up with reading ability in this language.

The library collection should reflect the different levels of reading ability in the native languages and in the new language. Materials offered should reflect the different interests arising from different cultural backgrounds.

The library should provide easy access to books and reading materials of all kinds. Special attention should be paid to the need of reading material for the immigrant children.

Information about the library collections should be offered in different immigrant languages.

9.4 Information technology

Information technology is rapidly gaining ground in public libraries. As a result of new technology a number of new media have been developed.

Such technology is also making the storage and recovery of information from data bases and microfiche far more effective. Also international library routines are affected by the technology, e.g. data-based catalogue and lending systems.

It is not necessarily the case that the transition to new technology will automatically be negative for people with weak reading ability. On the contrary, it could be an invaluable aid.

Many new media are particularly well suited for groups with reading difficulties.

Cassettes, recorded books and video can all be offered as additional to the resources contained in printed books. The libraries' printed information material can be combined with information on video and cassette.

Wherever new technology comes into use librarians should be aware of the effect on different user groups. Efforts should also be made to assess whether there are any additional media which are particularly suitable for people with reading problems.

An increased use of information technology combined with a high degree of self-service can add up to an insurmountable obstacle for people with reading problems when they come to use the library. The library should therefore evaluate whether an increased degree of self-service can be combined with manual service.

10. PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICES FOR THE ILLITERATES

Public libraries do not exist to serve the needs of an homogeneous and clearly defined group of the population. The potential user of the public library is the whole population.

The public library operates in four broad markets - education, information, recreation and culture.

Public libraries must be concerned that they serve the whole community and that the service offered should be open for all without barriers. Since illiteracy is a major barrier libraries should take an active part in promoting literacy. This could be done by introducing and developing services and facilities for the illiterate and the handicapped reader.

The library services offered must be adapted to their special needs and capacity.

A necessary prerequisite for achieving results in this work is, first of all, to clarify which target groups the work is directed to, and also with which organizations or professional groups it may be possible to cooperate.

The role of the library is to ensure that suitable materials are available and if necessary - and possible - to provide accommodation where tuition can take place. Information about what facilities the library can offer should be given in forms suitable to the different target groups.

10.1 Children

To identify the reading problems of children at an early age and to remedy them before they lead to frustration and to school drop-out is indeed an important task of the public library.

To offer special library service to children could be considered as a long-term strategy in the fight against illiteracy. The illiterate child runs a risk of becoming an illiterate adult. Children as such are not an homogeneous group and the degree of literacy varies.

Illiteracy could be caused by the lack of primary education or it can appear "just" as reading and writing difficulties. There are also the "book drop-outs", that is, children and adolescents who stop being interested in reading.

The public library should offer services to all these various categories.

The public library should try to attain an attractive childrens department equipped with suitable material. The book collection should contain fact and fiction of interest for children.

Conditions permitting, a collection of cassettes, records, videos, pictures, comics and data programmes should be developed beside the traditional printed material.

Even where lack of material and/or lack of resources prevent the library from offering a variety of material the public library can play an important role just by its existence and offer accommodation that enables children to do their homework and other reading in silent surroundings.

The public library offering service for children should always seek close cooperation with the school library.

10.2 The public library and adult illiteracy

Roughly the illiterate part of the population can be divided into three groups:

- people who have no command whatsoever of reading and writing skills,

- people who have a certain command of reading and writing skills, but are incapable of making use of them,

- people who master reading and writing skills and who are resourceful. Nevertheless they have an unhappy relationship with reading and writing.

The ability of the public library in helping to reduce basic illiteracy might seem rather limited, but is far from unimportant.

The library can constitute an element which helps to improve the situation by providing suitable material as an alternative to the printed word. The library can supply active assistance with specially adapted information material via co-operation with other departments, institutions and organizations.

The library could support adult education programmes by the provision of relevant didactic material.

Information about the library services must also be given in a way that it is understood by non-readers.

Co-operation with the local radio station and/or with adult education organizations could give additional publicity for the resources available.

10.3 Service to the new literates and to the functional illiterates

For people who to some extent have mastered reading public libraries can be helpful in improving their situation by providing suitable material.

First of all the public library must try to identify the size and the nature of the problem. It must also identify what kind of material would be relevant and by so doing attract the weak readers to improve their reading ability.

The library should offer easy-to-read material, magazines, local newspapers and comics. Besides, audio-visual material such as talking books/cassette books, videos and data programmes could be useful to improve reading.

It should be noted that simple form is not necessarily the same as oversimplified content.

To help these groups to find the library, co-operation with other institutions/organizations will be necessary.

10.4 Immigrants and ethnic minorities

Immigrants or ethnic minority groups need special support from the library.

The public library can play a very important role in helping immigrant and minority language groups to keep reading skills in their native language and also be the gateway to the new language.

The library should offer books and other material in the immigrant/minority languages.

The provision of daily newspapers will help immigrants to follow what is going on in the country of origin.

Language instruction programmes could be offered on loan and for use in the library.

A collection of easy-to-read books will help to learn the new language. If there is a special easy-to-read newspaper this should be found in all libraries.

Videos and talking books/cassette books in the native language should be offered, when available.

Information about the library services should be channelled via immigrant organizations and relevant institutions.

Library information material should as far as possible also be given in the different immigrant/minority languages.

10.5 The handicapped reader

For people with different reading handicaps, the blind, those who suffer from dyslexia or the disabled with difficulties to turn pages in a book, special material should be offered by the library.

The various individual needs should be met with largeprint books, easy-to-read books,audio-visual material such as talking books/cassette books, recorded newspapers and periodicals and videos. The library should observe what new facilities are offered by development in information technology that could be helpful for the handicapped reader.

10.6 What all libraries could do for people with reading difficulties:

- Learn about/acquire information about reading and writing problems.

- Subscribe to the informative leaflets and material produced by literacy organizations.

- Always let people know that the library has facilities to suit weak readers when giving information on the library´s services.

- Make sure that easy-to-read books are clearly marked and placed where they are easily accessible.

- Contact the local organizations and offer co-operation in arranging exhibitions and meetings.

- Take the initiative to start reading groups in the library.

- Pay attention to the weak reader when preparing information material, brochures and book lists.

- Pay attention to the weak reader when displaying and setting up signs, labels, shelves, catalogues and books.

11. STAFFING

Public library services vary according to the needs of the community and the resources available.

Library staff need to be varied in their personal qualities and qualifications.

Professional librarians are qualified by specialized education, usually at graduate or post-graduate level.

Clerical staff perform a wide range of tasks which do not call for professional qualification in librarianship.

Staff should be sufficient not only in numbers but also in categories. In particular, there should be sufficient professional librarians to carry out the tasks which require their training and skills.

It may be impossible for all but the largest of public libraries to have full-time professionals trained in literacy on the staff.

Libraries should make an effort to have at least one or two librarians with some special training or interest in literacy to be responsible for the literacy work.

It is however important that the public library effotts to promote literacy are not the responsibility of the few. One person being responsible should not be an excuse for the rest not to bother.

In literacy work co-operation with groups outside the library is of vital importance.

Good relations and co-operation should be established with different groups of volunteers since they play an important role in the work of combating illiteracy.

Of vital importance is also to recruit staff familiar with local conditions and, conditions permitting, well known to the population.

The importance of good relations to literacy trainers and tutors can not be overestimated.

12.THE NEED OF CO-OPERATION

Since illiteracy is a very diversified problem public libraries can not work in isolation. The public library must work in co-operation with other actors in the field.

Co-operation is a necessity preferably on the basis of clearly established rules and agreements.

There are a great number of special organizations which work for the benefit of literacy. These organizations often have specially trained staff who could give advice and guidance and who could act as key people in supplying other professionals with necessary insight and knowledge.

Co-operation should be carried out on all levels:

- national,

- regional or equivalent,

- local.

The national library association or equivalent institution should promote public libraries and inform government bodies about how they could be involved in literacy work.

Public library promotion should also be directed to the various national organizations working with literacy.

The regional level could be useful in co-ordinating different efforts in the struggle against illiteracy.

Training of library staff and further education and campaigns could be carried out successfully on a regional basis.

On the local level the public library should seek co-operation with:

- school and adult education organizations,

- local groups and societies,

- school libraries,

- mass media such as local radio, local press and TV.

For instance, the library could seek co-operation with the local Board of Education, the Social Security Office, the local Job Centre and voluntary study organizations.

Wherever close co-operation is developed, an arrangement should be made concerning the responsibilities and tasks of the individual parts.

Co-operative partners may also be attached to the library by giving organizations or societies the opportunity to hold their members' meetings in the library.

A close co-operation between the public library and the school libraries is always desirable. Co-operation should be established in order to share resources and gain relevant knowledge in order to support the children.

Wherever conditions allow an advisory committee under the managing bodies of the public and school libraries can be appointed to help with library matters involving children and young people.

Wherever co-operation is established, an agreement should be made concerning the responsibility of the individual parts. Where guidelines already exist they should be used as a foundation on which to build.

12.1 Co-operation with NGOs

Several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are devoted to the promotion of literacy. Some of these organizations operate worldwide, for example the International Reading Association, others work in parts of the world, for example the African Association for Literacy and Adult Education, or the European Bureau of Adult Education. There are also organizations devoted to the eradication of illiteracy working either primarily from an ideological basis or with defined target groups Such examples are the Catholic International Education Office, the International Federation of University Women, the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts. The NGOs play an important role in the literacy field.

Public libraries should always gather information about relevant NGOs and establish a close co-operation with them. In literacy programmes governed by NGOs the public library could offer valuable resources.

Co-operation with NGOs could be established on all levels: local, national as well as international.

12.2 The International Literacy Year

In connection with the International Literacy Year a special ILY Secretariat was established. To support the ILY Secretariat an Intersectorial Task Force was also set up.

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The principle Regional Offices in Amman, Bangkok, Dakar, and Santiago de Chile created regional task forces for ILY to support activities related to the implementation of the Plan of Action. More than forty States established national committees or other structures to plan and carry out national programmes for the International Literacy Year.

Public libraries should acquire information about relevant co-operation partners within the framework of UNESCO.

The four principal objectives of the Plan of Action are:

1) alerting world public opinion,

2) rallying the international community,

3) strengthening the regional literacy projects and programmes,

4) reinforcing technical and intellectual co-operation with the Member States.

Public libraries should accomplish activities aimed at implementing the plan.

13. HOW TO SUCCEED

Even if public libraries could be accused of neglecting the problem of illiteracy and concentrating on services for the literate groups, much effort has been made on how to combat illiteracy and promote literacy. Public libraries in the developing countries and in the developed countries have gathered valuable experience during a long time.

The following chapter will review some good examples from different parts of the world. Many of the examples given were presented at the IFLA Satellite Meeting "Public libraries against illiteracy" held in Massy, France, August 1989.

13.1 Libraries and literacy volunteers in California.

The problem of illiteracy in California and in USA had been subject of discussion and debate. Correct figures for the illiteracy rate were hard to define but it was estimated that 27 million Americans were illiterate.

In order to find out how widespread the problem was and what could be done about it, the California State Library commissioned a detailed study. ("Illiteracy in California; Needs, Services and Prospects". 1987).

This study estimated that 3.1 million adults (or 15.1% of the total adult population in California) lacked adequate reading and writing skills. It was found that illiteracy was not a problem confined to a single ethnic or linguistic group. The highest rates of illiteracy were found among minorities. But the greatest number of illiterates were white. The California Literacy Campaign CLC was initiated by the California State Librarian who in 1983 declared that "public libraries offer a unique opportunity for attacking the alarming problems of illiteracy in America".

The mission of the campaign was as follows:

- To develop and improve the basic functional literacy skills of persons aged 16 years and older who reside in the State of California, ordinarily speak English in their daily lives and are not currently being served by other educational programmes.

- Campaign programmes were to be operated by public libraries because literacy work relates to the library's purpose of enabling people to access information ideas and literature. Library-operated literacy programs were considered a means to improve people's reading skills and thus their ability to access the library resources.

USD 2.5 million in federal aid money were set aside for the literacy campaign, co-ordinated by the state but carried out through community-based programmes.

By raising the profession's awareness of literacy training needs and by encouraging voluntary participation in the Campaign librarians were challenged to lay aside old assumptions and look hard at the real needs of the most disenfranchised members of their community.

Federal funds were a necessary condition for launching the campaign. In 1984 the State Library commissioned an evaluation.

The evaluation was undertaken by Martha Lane who was very positive in her statements:"In six to eight months, most CLC projects have accomplished what it often has taken volunteer literacy programs two years or more to accomplish."

The federal funding was prolonged and increased. The number of participating libraries increased from 27 in 1984 to 78 in 1989. At the same time the number of students nearly tripled and the number of tutors went from 2 400 to 12 000.

The key concepts for the Campaign were community and coalition. The Campaign was based on community action and grass-roots support. Projects formed coalitions with school districts community colleges, with religious groups, service clubs,ethnical and cultural groups, job training or employment programmes and with literacy organizations.

The role of the state library was to bring the problem of illiteracy to the attention of policy makers and to the general public. The State Library also worked to enhance local publicity efforts. The design of a distinctive logo was one example.

In the first five years of operation the CLC enabled more than half of the public libraries to actively reach out to illiterate citizens.

Maack, Mary Niles. Libraries and literacy volunteers in California: a dynamic partnership. Paper presented at the IFLA Satellite Meeting "Public Libraries against Illiteracy", Massy, August 15 - 19, 1989.

13.2 Book boxes service in Brazil

The importance of library extension work in promoting literacy can not be stressed too much.

In Brazil close to one fourth of the population is illiterate. The book box service started in 1942. The idea of the service is very simple. The book box service can for economical reasons be an alternative where conventional solutions seem impossible or long term wishful thinking.

The main goals for the book box service is:

- to speed and simplify the users access to the books and thus provide the development of the reading habit,

- to encourage the establishment of fixed libraries,

- to favour the access to the library of people handicapped by several factors.

The book box service has several advantages, such as low costs. They are easy to handle. It is possible to provide a full-time operation where it is located: workplaces, community associations, nursing homes, daily care centres etc.

The book box organization and operation are normally controlled by a central library which administers and co-ordinates the service activities in agreement with the partner institution.

The collection is changed within a fixed time. Rotation is the basic element for the proper working of the system. The collection usually consists of 60 - 100 books.

Rosa Maria De Sousa Lanna stressed in her presentation the necessity of reciprocity in communication between the librarian and the community. She also pointed at the possibility to extend and develop the book box service.

There could be boxes with cassette tapes, recorded with news from papers and magazines, novels, short stories etc.

The box could contain virgin tapes where the history of the community could be recorded by it members. This material could be included in the library collection for circulation.

The box could be filled with up to date information about health care, employment etc. There could be special boxes for the new literates such as the comics library or the magazine bag.

The book box should not be considered as the final solution of the library and information needs in Brazil. But handled with care the book box could serve as a useful tool in promoting literacy in societies where the library system suffers from lack of resources.

It is a low budget alternative, and the book box service could also serve as a complement to the fixed units.

Sousa Lanna, Rosa Maria de, Library extension: a surprise box. Paper presented at the IFLA Satellite Meeting "Public Libraries against Illiteracy", Massy, France, August 15 - 19, 1989.

13.3 Village reading rooms: Library Services and Support for literacy in Botswana.

There are no reliable figures on illiteracy rates, but in 1979 it was estimated that the number was 250 000. That means roughly 25 per cent of the population in Botswana.

Literacy programmes launched in 1981 have involved 178 000 persons. Still it is hard to know whether the total illiteracy figure has increased or decreased. Literacy is not keeping pace with population growth, so that the absolute numbers of illiterates might have increased.

It is in the area of intervention and support of literacy programmes that library services are seen to be most crucial in Botswana rather than in conducting literacy teaching activities.

The Botswana National Library Services (BNLS) is also responsible for public libraries. The literacy and library services programmes are coordinated at the national level. There are established co-operation programmes at the village level through the Village Reading Rooms committees.

Concrete support for literacy programmes was first indicated through a draft proposal for the sixth national development plan for 1985 - 1991, which included a plan to establish 300 reading rooms in small rural villages.

In 1986 village reading rooms (VRR) were established as a joint venture between the literacy programme and library services.

The goals were:

- to promote reading habits among rural villagers,

- to act as information centres open for use by the community, adults, youth in and out of school, for acquiring government developmental information and information in general,

- to act as centres for promotion of culture, where discussion groups, traditional songs, dances and meetings would be organized and held,

- to provide forums for exchange of information between government personnel and the community to enhance participatory planning, implementation and feed back,

- to act as centres for storing Setswana literature and promotion of Setswana language.

The village reading rooms are established through contributions by the community which provides the building, the literacy programme which hires the Reading Room Assistant (RAA) and the library service which stocks the VRR as well as ensures that there is artificial lighting for the reading room.

The reading room assistants are trained by the library service in the management of VRR. The VRR has to a very large extent been used as an educational support by school going and school leaver youths.

Most of the VRR is housed in primary schools. The VRR has proved suitable for home work as they have good artificial lighting and provides an atmosphere conductive to quiet study.There is also a provision of reading material which might lead to the establishment of a reading habit.

There is an attempt to provide all materials produced in Setswana by the different sectors of agriculture, health etc. In addition to these materials in simple English are newspapers and magazines provided in either language.

The VRR is supposed to be a centre for the promotion of culture, including being a venue for traditional dances and meetings. The development of such activities will evolve out of a close interaction of the RAAs and the community. As the VRR is seen by the community as a place which is responsive to its needs there is an interest and an active participation.

Kay Raserokas conclusions were that the implication for RRAs librarians and library service as a whole is that the practice of the profession has to undergo a dramatic change. The centre is not the book but information whether conveyed orally or through literacy.

To obtain relevant information for dissemination needs must be known, and these cannot be learnt of in the cocoon of library buildings. Responsive librarianship requires interaction and active participation in the lives of the community.

Raseroka, H. Kay. Library Services and Support for Literacy in Botswana. Paper presented at the IFLA Satellite Meeting "Public Libraries Against Illiteracy". Massy, France, August 15 - 19, 1989.

13.4 The importance of co-operation

In Sierra Leone the public library has been collaborating with the Ministry of Education, Adult Education Unit, Institute for Adult Education and with the Extra-Mural Studies of the University, the Sierra Leone Adult Education Association (SLADEA) and the Peoples Educational Association of Sierra Leone (PEA). Active financial support has been given from the German Adult Education Association (DVV).

In 1984 the PEA started to collect stories and songs, riddles and proverbs from different areas in Sierra Leone. These have been transcribed and published.

PEA has now developed a vigorous publishing programme. The conclusions drawn are that the public library should be involved in the production of reading materials for new literates.

The new literates themselves should participate in developing texts either by tape-recording or by writing short stories.

As the lack of reading material suitable for the new literates is a general problem in developing countries, public libraries should conduct research to find out what kind of reading material is needed and then work with publishers, writers organizations and government departments to promote the development of local publishing.

The public library could also collaborate in the development of a rural press. The public library could make available multiple copies of the local newspaper.

An example given is that the provision of the local newspaper KIBARU helped new literate farmers in Mali. By publishing the official purchase prices, KIBARU enabled the farmers of Mali to obtain fair prices for their products.

In the example from Sierra Leone the importance of co-operation and collaboration with other institutions and organizations was strongly stressed.

The public library can not on its own deal with the problem of basic illiteracy. Public libraries must work hand in hand with other institutions and agencies involved in adult education and literacy work. And public librarians in developing countries have yet to play a more active role in the eradication of illiteracy.

Dillsworth, Gloria, E. Basic Illiteracy and the Public Library - The Problem in Review. Paper presented at the IFLA Satellite Meeting "Public Libraries against Illiteracy", Massy, France, August 15 - 19, 1989.

13.5 Ranfurly Library Service: an example of practical work against illiteracy

RLS is Britain's largest book aid charity. It is an independent voluntary organisation which works in partnership with people in over 70 developing countries. Every year more than 650 000 books are sent overseas in response to urgent requests from libraries and educational institutions in developing countries.

The aim of RLS is to share the power of the written word. This is done by meeting requests for books to support libraries and education and literacy programmes in communities suffering acute book shortages. The long term aim is to give practical support to local publishing and library development.

Only useful, relevant and up-to-date books in good physical condition are sent overseas. Most of the support that RLS gives to public libraries is through the Donated Book Programme.

The Donated Book Programme takes advantage of the surplus of books that exists in the UK, acting as an essential filter by discarding those that are old and inappropriate, and by dint of a thorough and lengthy book selection process ensuring that the books sent are carefully targeted to meet the vast range of needs expressed. Many of the books given are new books from publishers. Over 30% of the books sent out through the Donated Book Programme in 1989 came from this source.

The key to the success of the Donated Book Programme is the selection of relevant books from the mass of unsorted material that arrives daily at RLS. (1,5 million books were delivered to RLS last year). Where possible the users of RLS books are encouraged to come to the stacks in South London and choose for themselves.

Getting the people who use the books to choose the books is one way of getting round the problems of book selection, and where this is not possible librarians work from detailed guidelines which indicate a minimum standard for each book in terms of content and condition, together with detailed information on the book requirements of each institution that has asked for support.

RLS works with 28 public libraries or national library services in 28 countries on a regular basis. These libraries act as RLS distributors, keeping the books they require for their own stocks, and passing on the remainder to a wide range of institutions in their country.

Many more public libraries receive support through other RLS distributors, e.g. Rotary or the British Council, and in certain cases RLS meets individual requests from public libraries on a "one off" basis.

More than 80% of Tanzania Library Service's new stock comes from RLS, which sends them approximately 27,000 books a year.

The books RLS sends to Tanzania are distributed to the central library and the 15 regional libraries and from there to some of the 450 book centres in the rural areas.

The Tanzania Library Service co-operates closely with the National Literacy Campaign through its book centres. Librarians ensure that the extension workers running the adult literacy classes have access to relevant reference and resource material in important subject areas such as primary health care, agriculture and vocational skills. The extension workers will then translate books into suitable language and format for new literates.

In Guyana RLS accounts for approximately 40% of new book stock a year.

Zimbabwe is typical of children's libraries throughout the developing world and illustrates clearly why RLS finds that requests for children's books are a top priority for public libraries. Clear attractive picture books, information books and story books in English are essential to support English language learning in schools. Last year RLS sent 68,000 children's books to over 60 developing countries.

In 1989 RLS bought new books to the value of nearly £ 100,000 - a proportion of this was spent supporting public libraries in Zimbabwe, Malawi and Zambia through the Beit Trust.

RLS is working in a number of different ways to provide books where they are urgently needed."

Harrity, Sara, Ranfurly Library Service: An example of Practical Work against Illiteracy. Paper presented at the IFLA General Conference, Stockholm, 1990.

13.6 The Local Radio Project, Rogaland, Norway

The purpose of this project was to reach weak readers with library information over the ether. The intention was to stimulate interest in reading. The aim was also to help library personnel update their knowledge of problems connected with lack of reading and writing skills.

The co-operating partners were the public libraries in Haugesund, Karmöy, Sveio and Tysvaer, the Norwegian Dyslexia Association and the local pedagogical centres.

Marketing was carried out via local radio. "Sound posters" aimed at different age groups were broadcast four times a day for a four week period. Target groups were children, adolescents, adults and parents of children with reading and writing difficulties. Extensive listener surveys had been carried out beforehand, which enabled the "posters" to be broadcast at the most suitable times of day. These "sound posters" contained information to the effect that reading problems are common, and that having a reading problem does not indicate a low level of intelligence. Listeners were invited to the library, which also took the opportunity to publish its selection of easy-to-read books. The "posters" were broadcast in local dialect, and kept in a friendly and informal tone. The libraries received professional assistance from an advertising agency.

In order to update the knowledge of the library personnel a brief "basic book" was prepared, and adapted to the needs of libraries of differing sizes.

The "basic book" contained:

- information about the duties of the library,
- information about suitable books including recorded books,
- addresses for referring to specialists/professional groups,
- possible contact persons for help with training in reading,
- criteria for books suitable for dyslexia sufferers,
- reference list of easy-to-read books,
- information about training programmes.

The response was good, especially from children and from parents of children with reading difficulties. The number of requests for help to find material for and about weak readers quadrupled. The number of easy-to-read books borrowed by adults remained unchanged. The number of easy-to-read books borrowed by children increased by 50 per cent.

Functional illiteracy: what public libraries can do to help people with reading and writing problems. An ideas pamphlet. Paper prepared with support from the Norwegian and Swedish directorates for public libraries and presented at the IFLA Satellite Meeting "Public Libraries against Illiteracy", Massy, France, August 15 - 19, 1989.

13.7 Literacy Promotion in Thailand

Literacy rates in Asia differ widely. In some countries the literacy rate is below 50 per cent. Other countries show an literacy rate above 80 per cent. The countries which have surpassed 80 per cent literacy target all seem to have made strong efforts to combat the illiteracy problem. This can be seen in the National Plans of respective governments. The countries with lower literacy rates all seem to suffer from lack of political commitment and poor implementation of literacy programmes.

Thailand seems to be very successful in the struggle against illiteracy. The Ministry of Education set up the Adult Education Division under the Department of General Education some 60 years ago. Several approaches have been adopted, for example a compulsory mass campaign in 1940. These efforts have supplemented the impressive expansion of primary education.

In 1983 the Fifth Development Plan set a mandate to reach 1.5 million illiterates in 5 years. The campaign began in 18 provinces in 1984 and was gradually expanded to cover the entire country in 1986.

In planning for the National Literacy Campaign plans were also made to bring about a more literate environment.

These efforts included:

1. Establishment of a nationwide system of village reading centres.

The centres are constructed and operated by village committees with government support in the form of two daily newspapers and periodic wall-newspapers. Supplies of reading materials are enhanced through public donations, mobile libraries and rotating book boxes. During the 5-year period of National Literacy Campaign village reading centres increased from 8 100 to 28 000.

2. Temple reading Centres.

To further accelerate the expansion of reading resource centres in rural communities, the Department of Non-Formal Education encouraged the public to make merits to Buddhist temples in form of books to set up reading centres within the monasteries' compound.

More than 2 300 temples were able to set up reading services with donation from the public.

3. Public Libraries.

The establishment of public libraries started some 40 years ago. At present there are 73 provincial public libraries and 315 district public libraries. In addition there are various forms of mobile libraries using boats, motorcycles, book vans and book boxes to extend the service into rural areas.

4. The Reading Campaign

In 1984 a Nationwide Reading Campaign was launched by the Government. The campaign aimed to promote reading habits among children, youths and the general public. The campaign began with training workshops for teachers, librarians and key personnel involved in the promotion of reading. Some of the activities promoted in the campaign were: reading competition, book exhibition, reading circles, animated book presentation, story-telling and development of reading promotion manuals.

5. Book Donations.

A Centre for Book Donations was established in 1972. The donations are distributed to Village Reading Centres, District and Provincial Public Libraries and to primary and secondary schools in remote areas.

The achievement of the Thai's literacy efforts is the result of rich experiences on literacy education accumulated over the past 50 years and the united efforts of the entire nation.

Suckcharoen, Kammanee. Literacy campaigns in Asia and Thailand. Paper presented at the IFLA Presession Seminar on Public Library Policy, Härnösand, August 13 - 17, 1990.

13.8 Collection development in public libraries in developing countries (with example from Zimbabwe)

Bulawayo is the second largest city in Zimbabwe with an estimated population of 600 000. Bulawayo Municipal Library Service (BMLS) is one of the largest public library services in Zimbabwe. It is financed and administered by the city council and falls under the auspices of the department of housing and community services. The present structure comprises seven modern libraries in a perimeter of 45 kilometres.

The book collection is the life-line of any public library and should be well maintained even under the most difficult circumstances. Few public libraries are direct importers, and most services deal with booksellers. BMLS policy is to spread book orders over several firms for the benefit of the trade, and special public library discounts have been negotiated through the booksellers' association. The process of dwindling book stock is usually a gradual one. Shelves in bookshops empty over a period, and booksellers are forced to reduce library orders. Therefore it is important to accept realities at an early stage and not waste time in submitting orders which cannot be fulfilled.

Good housekeeping is seen as the first alternative. When new books are nearly impossible to obtain present holdings become precious, and maintenance has to be stepped up. Repair units are functioning in each library. Thousands of books are repaired before their condition deteriorate further. The latest annual figures indicate that 35 000 books were dealt with by library repair units.

Local publication is considered the second alternative. In Zimbabwe government has encouraged the publishing of indigenous literature for many years. The Literature Bureau was established in 1953. The Bureau's main function was to assess manuscripts which, if accepted as well written and of some market value, were passed on to commercial publishers. Another important function was to encourage and help inspiring authors in their writing. Seminars, workshops and competitions were organized for this purpose. The Bureau was taken over by the Ministry of Education in 1963 with the overall aim of making local literature available to the general public, including new literates. Over the years the Bureau has promoted some 400 titles.

Donations are seen as a third alternative. Ideally, libraries should be able to pre-select donated material. In that case many donations are valuable.

A twinning arrangement between Aberdeen and Bulawayo has been established. Twinning between libraries in developing and developed countries usually works well and suitable books can be selected on a professional basis.

Jessen, Karen, Collection development in public libraries in developing countries. Paper presented at the IFLA Presession Seminar on Public Library Policy, Härnösand, Sweden, August 13 - 17, 1990.

14. SUMMARY OF GUIDELINES

The purpose of this summary chapter is to bring together the main points.

It should be stressed that they are set out here as draft guidelines and that at a further stage they ought to be revised.

Since needs and resources vary so widely there can be no common standards or guidelines. Reservations must be made that some of the advice and examples given might not at all be applicable or relevant for some libraries but might for others.

It must also be stressed that the guidelines suggest what might be possible, but national/local conditions will dictate what is feasible.

It must be kept in mind the gap between what is desirable and what is possible.

14.1 The International Literacy Year

The International Literacy Year 1990 focused the problem of illiteracy.

It was considered that illiteracy was not solely a problem for the Third World. The problem of functional illiteracy was also made visible.

The Section for Public Libraries within IFLA in 1985 started to review the role and involvement of public libraries in combating illiteracy.

Illiteracy and the role of the public library has since then been the subject of special seminars and sessions at the annual IFLA General Conferences.

Financial support from UNESCO for establishing guidelines for public libraries working with illiteracy was allocated in 1989.

14.2 Facts and figures

First there is not one unambiguous sense of the term "illiteracy"or for "illiteracy" connected with various attributes. Definitions used in the guidelines are based on standard international documents.

Secondly, correct figures of the extension of illiteracy are not easy to obtain.

According to UNESCOs latest estimate in 1990 there were 948.1 million illiterates aged over 15. That is more than a quarter of the total adult population of the world.

The majority of adult illiterates are women.

The highest rate of illiteracy is in Sub-Saharan Africa, 52.7 per cent of the adult population, compared with 23.8 per cent in Eastern Asia and 15.3 per cent in Latin America.

Even the industrialized countries are affected by illiteracy. Many of these countries, where the problem of illiteracy seemed to have been solved long ago, have recently discovered that a considerable part of the population are functional illiterates.

14.3 The concept of public libraries

Public libraries do not exist to serve an homogeneous and clearly defined clientele. Their potential user is the population as a whole.

The public library operates in four markets - education, information, recreation and culture. Public libraries serve the whole community and the service offered should be open for all without barriers.

Since illiteracy is a major barrier, public libraries should take an active part in promoting literacy.

14.4 The role of the public library

Public libraries can not by themselves solve the problem of illiteracy and the complexity of eradicating it. But the public library can play an important role in cooperation with other institutions/organizations working in the field.

Public libraries must not ignore these problems but rather try to estimate the size and character of the difficulties and analyse how the public library could participate in the struggle against illiteracy.

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14.5 Necessary conditions for success

- Public libraries operate in a variety of conditions concerning resources, professional staff, premises, books or other library material, reading tradition and compulsory education.

- Whatever conditions are, public libraries must first of all define the problem and establish very clear objectives.

- The public library must have a conscious approach to the problem.

- The public library must develop channels for information and co-operation.

- The public library must define the different target groups

- Public libraries must make themselves visible.

14.6 Collection development

- Books are the basic material kept in libraries. The collection in the public library should meet all kinds of needs of the users.

- If the public library wishes to participate in the promotion of literacy attention must be paid to the need of relevant reading material.

- It is of vital importance that the collection reflects the needs of special reading materials for the poor reader.

- Public libraries should actively seek to develop a collection of non-print items in audio and video formats.

- The commercial book market might not always be aware of the needs of the population with reading difficulties.

- The public library should analyse what material could be attractive to the population with reading difficulties, call attention to the problem and encourage publishing of easy-to-read material.

- Literacy should not be a condition for benefiting from the public library.

14.7 Book donation programmes

- The lack of books and other reading material in certain parts of the world effectively prevents the promotion of literacy.

- Libraries could by co-operation improve the distribution of the surplus books to areas where they are urgently needed. This could be done by establishing book donation programmes or by twinning libraries.

- Very close co-operation must be established between the donation organization and the receiving library.

- Guidelines should always be established to avoid frustrating elements.

- Public libraries could also encourage indigenous publishing by the provision of copying equipment and other facilities.

14.8 Responsibility

- Public library efforts to promote literacy are not the responsibility for the few. The whole staff should feel involved in the struggle against illiteracy.

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Section for Public Libraries, for Childrens Libraries and for the Blind.

Theme: Workshop - LITERACY FOR ALL

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A Review of the Draft Document International Guidelines for Public Libraries Involved in Literacy Work: A Developing Country View.

by

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GENERAL COMMENTS

This paper should be read in conjunction with Thomas, Barbro DRAFT Document on: Guidelines for Public Libraries involved in Literacy Work, which is referred to as Guidelines throughout the paper.

The preconference seminar entitled "Public Libraries Against Illiteracy" held in Massy, Paris 1989 and "Public Library Policy held in Harnosand 1990 provide the take off point for the discussion of the role of Public Libraries in eradicating illiteracy. The greatest strength of the seminar was the spotlight it put on the case studies located in different parts of the world. It provided encouragement for those already involved in these efforts and perhaps provided examples for adaptation. In the process of analyzing these case studies as a base for a definition of the role which public libraries should strive for, what has been missed are the many experiences in the area of providing literacy support which have been started, discontinued or are still functional. Thus valuable historical insights have been missed.

If the aim is to provide Guidelines then a spectrum of library and literacy programme in maintenance\support of literacy activities needs to be collected, analyzed and evaluated. The goal will be to expose contexts, methods, strengths and weaknesses which have been contributory factors (excluding human interaction factors) to success or failure. These would be used as a base for selecting probable factors which contribute to success as well as identify indicators which might be used as beacons towards the formulation of guidelines.

In the section on International Guideline .... the draft document acknowledges the difficulty in producing a set of guidelines for widely differing contexts. (As a general observation, the attempt to produce international guidelines is not practicable). It is possible to produce Guidelines for Developed Countries where the contexts are to a large extent similar as determined by:

- high value placed on literacy
- availability of prerequisites for literacy acquisition
- well developed library systems.

Developing countries lack consistency on the above and are not uniform even within continents. Thus Guidelines for public libraries involved in literacy work in developing countries would be better defined and tackled at regional level using a bottom up approach which leads to a consensus Guidelines if possible. This approach might facilitate a common base, be accommodative of differences, yet challenge and stimulate professionals to analyze and address their differences, as they struggle for the ideal.

Guidelines in general must be seen to be attainable, in order to encourage professionals to devise strategic plans which are seen to incrementally lead toward the ideal. Guidelines should thus be seen as a natural outcome of the workshops whose objective is to "re-define the role of public libraries and the profile of the public librarian" as recommended by the Harnosand preconference.

Review

The draft document on Guidelines has for the purpose of this review been divided into the following sections; in order to ease discussion of issues:

- Definition and conceptual framework of literacy and the public library
- Current issues influencing the role of public libraries in the provision of adequate services to the new and functionally literate
- Proposals for services
- Summary of case studies

Conceptual framework.

The most important area for the development of the guidelines is that of definition and conceptual framework of literacy, the public library and its mission.

The public library mission and the conceptual framework in which library service is generally situated needs to be analyzed in

order to ascertain how useful a tool it is for meeting the demands being made of it. The results of this analysis will form a base for change of professional attitudes and approaches to service. The goals and objectives of acquisition, storage and dissemination of books and other printed and non-print materials, has tended to conceptually emphasise materials rather than the assessment and satisfaction of needs of the various publics. Materials are simply packaging of convenience for information which is the commodity which the public library should be peddling. A change in the current conceptual framework toward an emphasis for information as being central to library service would provide a base which is valid across the varying levels of development, i.e whether one is referring to illiterates and new literates in the third world or functionally illiterate in the developed world.

If this change of conceptual framework for public library service is accepted, then it necessarily leads to fundamental questions such as:-

why literacy at all?

after literacy what?

is basic literacy or functional literacy in itself a guarantee for personal development or opening of the mind to new ideas and their incorporation toward problem solving and creation of knowledge?

The ready acceptance of an assumption that literacy by itself is good perpetuates a simplistic view which has plagued the library profession. It also maintains the marginalisation of illiterates and new literates if the sloganeering "literacy is good" encourages expectations among the "victims" that literacy provides immediate access to jobs and development and is a panacea for all problems.

The indication in the draft document on Guidelines of the various literacy states touches upon the complexity of the field but through omission, down-plays its significance and implications for the practitioner. Yet these are the realities which committed professionals need to confront and grapple with, if a meaningful role for public library service is to be carved successfully. These complexities have been recognised as a major issue for Adult Educators. Wagner (1992) for example suggests that it is not practicable to select a universal operational definition of literacy because of the varieties of orthographies and numerous context specific uses of literacy. He goes further to tentatively suggest support for the following Unesco (1957) definition:

"Literacy is a characteristic acquired by individuals in varying degrees from just above none to an indeterminate upper level. Some individuals are more or less literate than others, but it is really not possible to speak of literate and illiterate persons as two distinct categories".

The Gray (1956) definition of functional literacy used in the draft Guidelines is both an advantage and a dilemma because of its flexibility of application in different cultures even within the same country - an important context for African countries.

Developing countries are well known to have numerous languages, for example 400 in Nigeria, the majority of which are not written, and 8 in Botswana. The selection of national languages is politically pragmatic yet pose dilemmas in the practical application of functional literacy in community contexts.

If a person is functionally literate in a mother tongue (not a national language), he or she is enabled "to engage effectively" within the context of his or her environment and community but is conventionally illiterate in designated national language, where would he or she fall in relation to proposed literacy programmes and related public library service?

Further there are research studies which show that there are other types of literacy which may not be subsumed by conventionally accepted definition of literacy. One of these examples is occupational literacy (Omoding-Okwalingo 1990) defined thus:

A person who is occupationally literate...one whose performance

was rated by similar practioners as appropriate to the occupation. Occupational literacy is closely linked to the socio-economic - contexts of individuals particularly in rural areas within developing countries. Occupational literacy is achieved mainly through apprenticeship as learning system and allows functionality of literacy within an occupation and socio-economic context.

In this study concepts of occupational literacy were applied to off farm occupations of carpentry, blacksmithing, potmaking and ropemaking.One of the findings was that there was no significant difference in the desire for further learning between literacy and illiterate practitioners. Motivation for further learning in both groups was to increase income and skills.

An issue for discussion by librarians and Adult Educators as they seek to establish Guidelines is : How can they help without devaluing indigenous learning systems and the other types of literacy which have served communities for centuries?

The problems posed by these issues suggest strongly the need for changing of priorities from reading as a basic requirement for interaction with the public library service to information provision. **The foundation of information which meets the needs of the wide spectra of users should be seen as a motivator towards creating a need for literacy which is a foundation for access to more information sources and self sufficiency in information gathering among clients. This would probably be**

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possible through literacy acquisition at its most efficient level as a skill.

Given that information is primarily transmitted, in all societies, orally and aurally and has been a successful vehicle of communication of knowledge why is literacy important particularly in out-of-school environment and in the adult world of work? An exploration of this area should contribute toward an understanding of literacy in the context of information provision and in the context of its usage. The role of librarians as facilitators whose work is client-needs grounded would emerge and encourage gradual change of attitude and service.

Issues influencing the role of public libraries

Current issues influencing the role of public libraries in the provision of adequate services to new literates and functionally illiterate is well done in so far as it covers traditional library materials.

The document stresses (in pages 8, 11, 13, 24 and 27) the need for libraries to set up forms of cooperation with various bodies since "it is ... unlikely that libraries will come to play a decisive role in the task of relieving functional illiteracy". The problems inherent in establishment of coalitions and cooperative efforts, however, have not been given attention. It would seem that this proposal changes the conceptual framework of public library activity from the passive, self-sufficient organism that it has traditionally been to a proactive one which forges symbiotic relationships with organisations and groups which have experience in community development. A prerequisite for successful coalitions is that services offered by potential partners have to be analyzed. This will help identify and explore niches in which the public librarian can fit, offer expertise and be seen to be complementary rather than a usurper of roles.

The public librarian is challenged, therefore, to be involved in research activity (rather than relying on intuition based approaches) as a matter of routine in order to discover:-

- the range and needs of the "publics"
- the range and services of potential partners
- the public library's potential and weaknesses in meeting the implications of a changed conceptual framework.
- cost implications for implied organisational change and support for a primarily proactive market-based activity.

The interpretation and operationalisation of research findings in the development or incorporation of partnerships as well as regular evaluation should be seen as a necessary part of future guidelines.

The role of the media in advancing information delivery and the potential to which its products can be repackaged for use by the public library has been omitted.

Proposals for services

The draft document proposes public library services which are target linked.

The strength of this section is also its weakness. It has tended to prescribe in detail activities under each target group. Some of these overlap or are variations of common themes. The section needs to be pithy, yet provide an adequate guide to allow for flexibility of application.

All target groups exist within a context. The basic premise for service should be an understanding of and close interaction with the support system of each group. Hence it would seem appropriate that the identification of services already available to a target group be the first on the list of guidelines. This would serve to focus attention on assessment of target groups as a base for identification of needs of...... This principle should be applied to all groups under section 10. The identification of the various needs of each group would lead to a systematic development of new areas of activities which might be similar in operation but require different levels of professional\subject field expertise.

The benefit of such an approach would be to eliminate repetition of strategies in the presentation of guidelines.

Staffing

Staffing requirements arise out of identified and planned service. Cooperation coalitions affects library service in varying ways depending on the contexts. Thus discussion on cooperation should precede that on staffing.

The section on cooperation needs to establish, as a principle the basic tenet of negotiated rules and agreements. The numbers of specialist organizations which each library service intends or seeks to cooperate with will determine the place and role of links administration of cooperative or coalition activities within a system.

Link administration might range from being a part of central administration with inputs from specialist librarians or specialist organizations to being a fully fledged section

incorporating market research, public relations, marketing and cooperation services concerned with a range of activities such as:

- analysis of organisations and the environment in which the library service operates
- Identification and targeting of organisations to be lobbied for backing or to form coalitions with
- identification of training needs for library staff
- costing, identification of funding sources, preparation and presentation of project proposals
- evaluation of all cooperative activities
- keeping communication lines open at all levels of the cooperative including policy, administrative and operational levels.

The advisory committee would use information drawn from this forum, in its relations with all cooperative partners.

Staffing implications in terms of numbers, specialization and training needs can only be analyzed once the objectives, goals and their operatienalization have been worked out in detail.

The section on staffing recognises the need for diversity in qualifications of professional staff. The extent of

specialization will be based on the plans of a specific library service. Training and continuing education need to be highlighted.

Case Studies

The case studies presented are selections based on the Massy Seminar and Harnosand Pre-conference. It is important to search for and assess past and existing case studies in order to isolate important lessons. The literature on Adult Education and literacy has provided various studies from a point of view of literacy campaigns and programmes, Richmond (1986), Hamadache and Martin (1986), Muller (1986). Within this forum are experiences for support of literacy which may be applicable to library services. If these experiences are found to be lacking appropriateness to library applications they would, nonetheless, **provide available practical knowledge. Exposure to these is essential for public library professionals in their search for meaningful ways of cooperation and involvement. Exposure to particularly the Francophone experiences in literacy support would be valuable and informative since their approach is better grounded in needs assessment and local conditions than most African Anglophone experiences.**

CONCLUSION:

The draft Guidelines form a valuable working document for use by the various regions in reviewing the role of the public library and its services to illiterates, new literates and functionally literate publics.

For the document to advance the development of library service however, it needs to critically analyze the existing conceptual framework on which the goals and objectives of public library service is currently based, and its relevance to needs as expressed by the different publics.

Definitions of literacy need to explore the broad spectrum of the possible states covered by the term before the role of public library service may be usefully charted under the different contexts.

The evaluation of the relevance of the Public Library manifesto will be a result of the above analysis.

The draft Guidelines have provided a starting point for the development of an experience-based dynamic document or documents which will assist the different public library systems to develop relevant services.

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A COUNTRY OVERVIEW OF INTER-LIBRARY LOAN SERVICES OF SPECIAL FORMAT MATERIAL FOR THE VISUALLY HANDICAPPED IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper gives an overview of Inter-Library loan services provided by the National Library for the Print Handicapped of National Institute for the Visually Handicapped, 12 selected public libraries and 141 academic libraries in India. Focus is made on how National Library for Print Handicapped is coordinating this service on International and through readers clubs at the national level. This paper is an effort to produce sensitivity, awareness and insight into their special needs, and to discuss various ways by which National Institute for the Visually Handicapped can better reachout visually handicapped clientate. Ideas and information penetrate the barriers of despair in which the visually handicapped find themselves in developing countries, and provide opportunities for self fulfillment.

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INTRODUCTION

India is a vast country comprising twenty five States and seven Union territories with an estimated population of 35 million blind persons. Out of this about 73% live in remote rural areas. There is no data available on the literacy rate among the visually handicapped which would provide guidelines for extension of library services to this segment of population. According to a survey conducted by the National Institute for the Visually Handicapped in 1989 there are about 12219 stddents enrolled in 215 special schools for the blind..This estimation is based on various information sources like enrolment in different libraries, serving for the blind, integrated education programmes and various projects for the literacy. About 35,000 visually handicapped persons are able to take benefits of special format materials like Braille and recorded Cassettes throughout the country.

There are students going to colleges, universities for higher learning with sighted one's, number of which is not precisely known, but need special format materials for furtherance of their studies. There is a small segment of blind persons that is not included in school settings, they are either engaged in different professions, public and private services or just roam in their neibouring surroundings but have interest in reading Braille. This constitutes clientele/users in need of library services in the special formats. There are many regional languages different from one another of which 14 languages are recognised under the constitution of India other than Hindi and English as major languages.

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There are 13 Braille Embossing presses, located in different geographical regions to undertake embossing into Braille and 15 studios for recording of special format material to meet the needs of educated users.

TABLE I

LOCATION OF BRAILLE PRESSES AND LANGUAGES EMBOSSED IN

1.	Govt. Braille Press, Mysore	Karnataka	Kannada
2.	Sir, J.Duggan Braille Press, Bombay	Maharashtra	Marathi Gujrati
3.	Regional Braille Press, Poonamallee, Madras	Temilnadu T	Temil
4.	C.B.N.Braille, Madras	Tamilnadu	English
5.	Regional Press, Hyderabad	Andhra Pradesh	Telgu
6.	Red Cross Braille Press, Behrampur.	Orrissa	Oriya
7.	Regional Braille Press, R.K.Mission, Narendrapur 24 Parganas	West Bengal	Bengali
8.	Govt. Braille Press Bilaspur.	Madhya Pradesh	Hindi
9.	Regional Braille Press Ahmedabad	Gujrat	Gujrati
10.	NFB Braille Press Bahadurgarh	Haryana	Hindi
11.	S.K.T. Braille Press Trivendrum	Kerala	Malyalam
12.	R.K.M. Vidyalaya College Coimbotore	Tamilnadu	English Tamil
13.	Central Braille Press Dehradun	Uttar Pradesh	Hindi Punjabi English

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TABLE - II

REGIONAL TALKING BOOK RECORDING STUDIOS

S.No.	State	No. of Studios	Language	Title	Institution/ Organisation
1.	Delhi	2	Hindi, English	120	B.R.A., New Delhi
2.	Gujrat	2	Gujrati,Hindi English	55	B.M.A., Ahmedabad Gujrat
3.	Haryana	1	Hindi	30	S.D.Braille & Tape,Library Haryana
4.	Maharashtra	4	Marathi, Gujrati	60	MP Shah, Memorial TBL NAB Bombay)
5.	Orissa	1	Oriya	12	Red Cross Society Behrampur, Orissa
6.	Uttar Pradesh	5	Hindi,English Kannada,Punjabi	185	NIVH,Library Dehradun(U.P)
7.	West Bengal	1	Bengali	18	R.K.M.Ashram for Blind 24, Pargana W.B.

NATIONAL SCENE

National Institute for the Visually Handicapped, voluntary organisations and state institutes for the blind produce Braille and recorded books for their users. The libraries enrich their collection in special formats by acquiring books and magazines from other libraries for the visually handicapped for readers. This special format material is circulated for the blind free of postal charges among institutions as well as to visually handicapped individuals.

Sharing special format material among libraries for the blind is an important way in which the wider range of materials can be made available to persons who do not ordinarily have access to the printed world. Since any given Library can produce only a small percentage of Braille and audio books compared to the total print output, it is desirable that the collection of libraries for the blind be open to eligible persons anywhere, in order to expand the universal availability of reading material. Print handicapped readers often depend on having access to several media collections to round out their reading needs. National Library for the Print Handicapped, a department of National Institute for the Visually Handicapped was set up in 1963. In the beginning years of its establishment its primary objective was to lend braille books to blind readers throughout the country. To start with the library had a meagre stock of few hundred braille volumes which were mainly in English obtained from England. Over the years, the Library has grown at a rapidpace and now has 50,000 Braille volumes in English, Hindi and Regional languages.

NLPH acquires 51 Braille magazines and journals from within the country and overseas. The Library acquires atleast 5 copies of every braille and audio publications that are produced for the blind in India. All this, special format materials, is circulated through out the country via Readers-Clubs and on individual memberships.

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TABLE - III

SERIAL PRODUCED IN BRAILLE IN INDIA

S.No.	Title	Periodicity	Language	Publisher
1.	Nayan Rashmi	Fortnightly	Hindi	NIVH, Dehradun
2.	Braille Bharati	Bimonthly	Hindi	AICB, New Delhi
3.	Braille Digest	Bimonthly	English	AICB, New Delhio
4.	Vartman	Fortnightly	Hindi	NAB, Bombay
5.	Vigyan Bharati	Quarterly	Hindi	NAB, Bombay
6.	Chandamama	Quarterly	Marathi	NAB, Bombay
7.	Chandamama	Quarterly	Hindi English	NAB, Bombay
8.	Sparsha	Quarterly	Hindi	NAB, Bombay
9.	Vishwadarshan	3 yearly	Hindi	NAB, Bombay
10.	Asha	Quarterly	Gujrati	ASM, Rajkot
11.	Sparsh	Monthly	Hindi	NFB, Bahadurgarh
12.	Antar Jyoti	Bimonthly	Marathi	PBMA, Poona
13.	Braille Sandesh	Quarterly	Gujrati	BMWA, Rajkot
14.	Blind Welfare	3 yearly	English	NAB, Bombay
15.	Chandora	Quarterly	Marathi	NAB, SJD Press
16.	Gyan Jyoti	Quarterl;y	Marathi	NAB, Nagpur
17.	Deepak	Bimonthly	Hindi	CBM, Tamilnadu

Purchase is the most effective and straight forward means of acquiring special format material from other agencies for the blind.The advantage is that purchased material can be added to the permanent collection of purchasing library and circulated continuously to readers.

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Immediate purchase of books, as are produced, give readers, of purchasing library a timely access to current literature but most significant problem with the purchase of materials is the cost. Even when sold "at cost" the purchasing organisations in India, have limited funds for this purpose. Certainly funding is a serious limiting factor for libraries in India, where, in these times of inflation obtaining foreign exchange is an additional problem to share in the reading of special media materials. Question of copyright and intellectual property have no important bearing on the production as well as on sale of special format books in India.

INTER LIBRARY LOAN SERVICES

Resource sharing is a need based concept found on the principle 'Share with me and I will share with you'. In a vast country like India, with limited resources, Nationl Library for the Print Handicapped is taking a lead in collaborating with other agencies to develop its own network. Objectives and functions of this network are to share, periodically, various types of information relating to visually handicapped. This will help in identification of information and reading need based problems. Analysis of multi-dimensional production and filling up the gap of various information needs of the visually handicapped persons and the Institutions.

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Inter Library loan services are available to the visually handicapped in languages as per table IV below:

S.No.	State	School Lib	Engol:	Public Lib.	Enrol	Readers Clubs
1.	Andhra Pradesh	10	810	1	350	5
2.	Assam	1	140	-	-	-
3.	Arunchal Pradesh	0	0	0	0	0
4.	Bihar	10	493	1	260	8
5.	Chandigarh	1	44	-	-	-
6.	Delhi	3	498	1	1405	7
7.	Goa	1	15	-	-	-
8.	Gujrat	16	1562	2	505	10
9.	Haryana	5	293	2	550	3
10.	Himachal Pradesh	1	22	-	-	-
11.	J & K	1	65	-	-	-
12.	Karnataka	6	655	-	-	5
13.	Kerala	9	451	-	-	-
14.	Madhya Pradesh	12	851	-	-	3
15.	Maharashtra	26	1681	-	-	5
16.	Manipur	1	48	-	-	1
17.	Mizoram	1	160	-	-	-
18.	Nagaland	1	12	-	-	2
19.	Orissa	3	580	-	-	-
20.	Pondichery	1	47	-	-	-
21.	Punjab	4	268	-	-	5

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22.	Rajasthan	3	259	-	-	2
23.	Tamilnadu	18	1578	1	1055	3
24.	Tripura	1	58	-	-	-
25.	Uttar Pradesh	7	1084	-	2985	11
26.	West Bengal	9	585	2	405	3
		141	12259	11	6615	73

National Library & Information Services of National Institute for the Visually Handicapped plans to expand its existing services and establish a number of new services. These include making reading material whether in Braille on cassettes or in large print to all the needy blind persons living in the country to promote literacy among the illiterate throughout the country.

Currently, only 5 to 8% blind population is literate benefitting from the library media services. Number, perhap~~o~~s could be raised to 25% by the end of 8th plan period.

It is the attitude of library professionals and other professionals working for the welfare of the visually handicapped that can make resource sharing and library and information services a success. Actually, these days, there is, a sort of unwillingness to service in the minds of workers and semi professionals for the inter library loan services in India, causing problems to this great service. Future, education and professional activities, like this, would create an added interest in the minds of professionals to serve in a better why, in times to come.

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LITERACY AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE THIRD WORLD: COULD LIBRARIANSHIP MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

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LITERACY AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE THIRD WORLD: COULD LIBRARIANSHIP MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Third World countries were labeled "underdeveloped" until the United Nations deemed it appropriate to change that label to "developing." The new term does not discriminate among nations, since, in effect, all nations are developing. The term "developing," however, usually refers to a nation that is making progress toward providing adequate food, health, housing, and educational opportunities to its population. The World Bank defines a developing country as one that has yet to achieve the technical, economic, educational, or social standards available to other more developed nations.

It has become customary, when dealing with the so-called "developing countries," to warn about the dangers of generalizing about nations that are often geographically far apart and have totally different historical and cultural backgrounds. Although Third World countries have some characteristics in common, they also have marked differences which influence their pattern of development. There are ethnic as well as cultural and social differences, and there are also different political alignments.

It is equally evident, however, that developing countries suffer from problems and conditions that are strikingly similar and all too familiar, such as rapid population growth, enormous gaps between needs and the resources available to meet them, widespread illiteracy, lack of homogeneity, wide differences in living standards between the rural and the urban sectors, and a rising tide of urbanization and industralization, which brings about such far-reaching social changes as the disruption of traditional cultural patterns. It has been said that millions of people who live in the Third World have only one thing in common: the pattern of underdevelopment.

Information for Development, The Issue of Our Times

Development is a continuous process in which there are areas of conflict at the local, national, regional, and international levels between those who have benefited from the process and those who have not. In the 1960's and 1970's, development was synonymous with economic growth and the idea of progress. For many developing countries, it meant telescoping into a few decades what industrial countries had taken more than a century to achieve. Today it has become apparent that development problems are more serious and complex that some economists and social scientists have supposed. Not only has the spreading of wealth not occurred, but development in terms of pure economic growth has resulted in an intensification of such ills as the widening of the gap between the "have's" and the "have-not's."

The perceptions have changed today; development countries now seek development that is indigenous and appropriate to their particular culture and ethos. Planners, social scientists, and political leaders in the Third World countries have become aware that the ills plaguing their countries cannot be eradicated as long as other social transformations (inappropriate institutions, attitudes, and values) do not occur.

Some of the consequences of underdevelopment are bringing untold suffering to millions of people. The hope is that the Third World countries, while eliminating that suffering as soon as possible, will draw upon the best from the developed world and combine it with their own uniqueness to produce a liberated and humane society. Whether the developing countries can manage such a change without violent revolution is a critical question.

As we approach the year 2000, developing countries all over the world are faced with a crisis and a challenge. The crisis is the failure of formal education, which for many years was perceived as the key to development and social justice. Instead, scarce resources, burgeoning school-age population, widespread illiteracy, endemic wastage and stagnation within the educational system, and abysmally low quality of the system's products prevail. As a result, the socio economic vacuum into which graduates of the system enter has shattered the old dream that educational expansion by itself will lead to social and economic progress.

The challenge is the challenge of information. In modern civilization, it is well known that communication and information have become dramatically and strategically important. The impact of technology is changing most aspects of our daily lives. Communication technologies are now being inexorably integrated, and this merger, or "telematics" as the European call it, is creating new intellectual capabilities by virtue of the technologies assisting the human brain.

The political, economic, cultural, and social implications of this technological revolution are immense and can be summed up in a sentence which is a warning but which might become a prophecy: Presently the underdeveloped nations of the world are those which came late to the their industrial revolution, and the underdeveloped nations of the future will be those which will come late to the information revolution.

Can this prophecy be avoided?

Education, Literacy and the Transfer of Technology: Three Basic Issues of Development

Development has been conceptually defined as the rationalization of potential already existing in the historical-social processes of a given country, at a given moment of its history. In the history of social processes of mankind, there a few cases of spontaneous development; therefore, the widespread conclusion is that in order for rapid development to take place, it must be directed. In fact, development implies a planned change; it implies changes within the social structure of a country, a region, or a community.

In Third World countries it is generally believed that only though planning can education contribute effectively to the development process, and that libraries, as integral part of education, must be incorporated into that planning.

The necessity of planning economic, social, and cultural development is recognized by most government leaders in developing countries. National planning requires the structural transformation of a country in a conscious, explicit, and orderly manner, in an effort to reach local goals and objectives, not only of an economic but also of a political nature. In the Third World, development planning is more than a technical exercise; it is essentially a political process, for the national plan becomes a tool with which a society deliberately allocates resources, creates new institutions, and reforms existing ones.

Development and Education

The government of developing countries have recognized the importance of education in the development process; the right to education, in the most complete sense, is considered the keystone to social justice and national development. Consequently, national governments in developing countries are intent on expanding their school systems using a substantial part of their budgets to increase educational opportunities.

However, critical assessments of the different educational situations throughout the Third World indicate that these efforts have not achieved the desired results. The rates of reception, dropping out, and illiteracy continue to be high and, in many instances, have risen. Although the reasons for these failures do not always take the same form and are not present to the same extent in the differents countries, some common problems can be identified.

The most obvious problem is that there are limits to the investment of resources. The expansion of education cannot keep pace with the population explosion. In Ivan Illich words, "no country yet succeeds in giving five full years of educations to more than one third of its population; supply and demand for schooling grow geometrically apart." Other issues raised by the failure of formal education spring from the rapid expansion of education at all levels which has been achieved by sacrifying quality to quantity.

Another important explanation is the lack of relevance that the education provided has to the actual conditions and needs of the country. Here, as in other social field, the basic problem is the gap that separates the reality of underdevelopment from the ideals, theory, and methodology which underlie the foreign educational models that are adopted and followed. This situation is likely to be aggravated by planning schemes and attempts at reform and innovation which do not take into account deeply ingrained cultural attitudes.

Development and Technology

The second crucial issue for developing countries is the role of technology in development strategies. It is evident that the information revolution has deeply changed the structure of many industrialized countries. The tremendous potential of technology has increased possibilities for information storage, processing, dissemination, and retrieval. Developing countries are benefiting slowly and feebly from technological innovations which have not been designed for the particular needs, planning, and management capabilities of these countries. In addition, technological advances are often introduced without due consideration of evaluation and transfer problems. For lack of information concerning possible options, those countries often acquire the wrong technology at the wrong moment for the wrong purpose.

Technology is an essential factor of change and, as such, can no longer be considered simply a neutral instrument. Commitment to technology means the acceptance of certain social structures and orientations, and it implies, here again, the adoption of certain values which might endanger existing values. Furthermore, because of its high cost, technology might increase the dependency of countries on the assistance of the developed world.

The problem does not lie in the importation of technology per se, but in the absence of selectivity and, above all, in paying for technology without actually securing control over it much less over its reproduction and adaptation.

Librarianship and Technology

The strong relationship between librarianship and the significance of the book in Western societies seems to be unquestionable, and well documented. The influence of the physical characteristics of the printed record on the evolution of librarianship has also been amply discussed in the literature. For example, it has often been amply pointed out that the custodial aspect of the librarian's task ties him to a physical setting to a greater degree that other occupations, and that virtue of this physical imperative a shift of emphasis takes place from the goals of librarianship per se into functional aspects. Also, the point has often been made that restriction to a definite ecological area (the library and its surrounding community) brings about dependency and limitation of role as well as a deep sense of loyalty towards a habitual clientele and strong commitment to serve its particular needs.

It has been said that in transitional periods clashes occur as we tend to approach the new with the psychology and the sensory responses of the old. This view was exemplified when librarianship was confronted by the proliferation of communication media of the twentieth century.

Librarians remained prisoners of the psychological, emotional, and intellectual conditioning of the world of print and were reluctant to reevaluate their role in terms of the perspectives of the new media. Not only were they generally slow to grasp the immense potential of the computer for library operations but, with the exception of school librarians and some public librarians, they saw in the advent of oral and visual media a subordinate order to be contained rather than a new order to be adjusted to.

Clearly in those parts of the world where the process of passing from an oral tradition to a written one is still taking place, and were communication by word of mouth coexists on a large scale with the most sophisticated electronic media these traditional attitudes are damaging and misleading.

Development and Literacy

Perhaps of the most pressing problems of developing countries is the eradication of illiteracy. It has been estimated that one fifth of the world's total population are still illiterate. Of course, these statistical calculations are only approximate, since even the definition of illiteracy is a problem. Concepts of illiteracy vary widely and they depend on many social and cultural variables. The fact is, that there is no clear way of determining where illiteracy ends and literacy begins. Moreover the problem is not confined to the Third World. As several studies point out illiteracy is present in industrial countries with compulsory schooling.

Many developing countries, however, are dealing with illiteracy rates of 70 percent or higher, and in some areas nearly total illiteracy. Because of the awesome dimension of the problem, one could say that basic literacy constitutes the biggest challenge that Third World librarians confront. To put it buntly and simplistically, illiterates or functional illiterates do not use libraries. This dramatizes the fundamental gap between developed and developing countries.

Most developing countries have embarked, at one time or another, on a large-scale campaigns to promote literacy using various approaches and different agencies. The total or partial failure of such efforts has raised important questions about the importance of literacy as the foundations for economic and social progress.

Developers, especially economists, maintain that literacy enters into the realm of development not simply by employment in activities that obviously require the ability to read and write. They point out that literacy includes an element of change in men's perceptions of the alternatives of action that are open to them. The ability to read contributes an awareness of unconventional and non traditional ways of doing things, of pursuing jobs or careers different from those which kin or neighbors have followed. Furthermore, old lines of work change because literacy brings accessibility to the store of how-to handbooks.

Another important set of questions springs from the relationship between literacy and schooling, and between formal education and the principles and theory of adult education. At one time it was thought that if universal primary education could be introduced, the problem of illiteracy could be solved in one or two generations. This idea has proven to be illusory, and there is evidence that, although the percentage of people who are illiterate may be slowly declining, the total number is constantly increasing. The population explosion alone does not explain such failures. More relevant are the arguments that schools have proven incapable of adjusting to the cognitive level of their clients and have, in effect, excluded those unable to handle the complex and abstract mental operations that the schools assume to be basic for learning.

As we enter the so-called information age, government are facing the failure of formal education and are being forced to accept the reality that nonformal education is an immediate need. Yet several questions remain unanswered: Nonformal education takes place with or without literacy? Does literacy promote development? Within the present development context in most Third World countries, why not provide the needed support systems now through use of nonprint media?

Librarianship and Reading

The effects of literacy have received considerable attention from students of culture and cognition. These effects are recognized as being cognitive, economic, social, and cultural. It has been pointed out that literacy may have effects on the "technology of the intellect" as l as on the contexture of attitudes. Marshall McLuhan has talked of a new epistemology of hat changes the way in which the literate individual acquires and organizes knowledge he surrounding reality. Characteristics that result from literacy include individualism, jectivity, the ability to hold individual opinions, the capacity for logical analysis of context, independent abstract thinking, and a sense of history.

The relationship between librarianship and the intellectual characteristics of communication media are very ambiguous. The library profession has generally ignored the significance of this research. Although librarians see the promotion of reading as one of their major tasks and for centuries have been dedicated to providing the "best" books to their users, they have paid little attention to the processes involved in the act of reading.

As a result, the profession's response to two of the most important issues of modern society - literacy and universal education - has been erratic. In an assessment of the intellectual history of american librarianship, M. H. Harris describes this reaction as a series of "frenetic crusades" followed by relapses into "a somnolent and ambivalent attention to the mechanics of their role as custodians of the printed record."

As policy makers and planners all over the developing world engage in the difficult process of making choices among educational approaches and information strategies to serve development objectives, they need to hear from information specialists about the motivational and informational capacities of different media-that is, each medium's respective characteristics and the effects each has on the individual, community, and society. Third World librarians cannot afford to remain confused and divided with regard to these issues.

Under these circumstances the role of Librarianship, the profession that purports to make all human knowledge available, will be crucial as advisers on the approaches and strategies to be taken, and on the selection of methods and instruments to be used. Now the question is Librarianship ready and able to assume such a role? What exactly should the librarians do to contribute to the cultural, economic and social development of a Third World country?

Librarianship and Culture

Librarianship, as a social instrument and a service to society, has followed a process of institutionalization influenced by the organizational structure and value system of its supporting system. It is therefore interesting to note that while the evolution of librarianship, in its functional dimension, has tended toward standardization and uniformity, owning in part to the universal currency of the book, in its contextual dimension it has spawned a certain degree of diversity.

Most of the library development that has taken place in recent times has stemmed from what may be termed the Anglo-Saxon tradition; the patterns that have resulted have been propagated, consciously or unconsciously, by Western librarians traveling abroad on consultant missions and through library literature, much of which has been produced in the United States. The major lines of development that have characterized the growth of North American librarianship reveal it as part of a particular process of institutionalization that characterizes American culture and American psyche. Among the cultural elements that have determined the socialization of librarianship in the Unites States, two are of particular importance for our present concern: the tradition of local government and the principle of participatory democracy.

In contrast to many developing countries, and particularly to Latin American countries, where the development of libraries is centrally planned and governmentally supported, the establishment and support of libraries in the United States has been mostly a local undertaking, originally through support by private groups, and, in the case of public libraries, by local governments. On the other hand, because the political structure of the United States aims at participatory democracy, the social function of the library rests on the notion that information and democracy, even participatory democracy, are interdependent ideas. Indeed, the concept of a library directly linked to the democratic ideals of equal opportunity and freedom of expression is an article of faith with American librarians.

From the convergence of these two principles, the role of the librarian in the United States has emerged as that of mediator among coexisting interests, bend on providing the community with a service based on the assessment of perceived or felt needs. Students of library history have pointed out that the mediator role has often resulted in the domination of influential groups and that the principle of democratic localism has, in the long run, made the American library an elitist institution.

Ivan Illich points out that the nations of the West are packaging their services to contain the views of the world. He also contends that industrialized societies provide such packages for the consumption of their citizens, and that "the more the citizen is trained in the consumption of packaged goods and services, the less effective he seems to become in shaping its environment." What is true of citizens is also true of nations and, consequently, Illich defines underdevelopment as the "surrender of social consciousness to pre-packaged solutions."

The world view of developing countries is embodied in the ideas and values that underlie their concept of development, and those ideas and values stress social justice and independence. Too often, however, the struggle for independence has been outside the direct experience of the masses. Independence has been good news, and true participatory democracy is an ideal to be striven for, but most people in the Third World have been spectators rather than participants in the process of social change.

Development implies change, and a most significant part of change is a change in the current held perceptions. Does that mean that change requires the imposition of a visionary leadership? American librarians would rebel against such a suggestion. On the other hand, the Third World librarians would say that being merely an impartial mediator only perpetuates existing inequalities. The principle of free participation has no meaning in contexts where most people are unable to participate. At issue here is the question: Can librarianship become a change agent in the process of development and, if so, how? This first part of the question addresses the issue of change in society.

The Concept of Change and Third World Development

Traditionally the understanding of human intellectual adventure has been the domain of philosophy and history. In the present-day society, the problem of societal change and the processes by which change is generated, implement, diffused, and adopted have become the focus of attention of a number of researchers and theorists in a variety of field and have given rise to a new disciplinary area of study - the study of innovations. In fact, research in the diffusion of innovations is a form of communication research which can be traced to the European schools of anthropology, where it was claimed that all changes in society result from introduction of innovations from other societies.

The transfer of library patterns from the developed to the developing countries are examples of cross-cultural diffusion of innovations, and the conflicts and tensions created must be understood by two audiences - those First World professionals who are already living in the information society of the twenty-first century, and primarily, the influential librarians of the developing countries themselves.

During the 1970s, among developing countries, fear that they were becoming increasingly dependent on industrial countries for information and technology prompted them to increase their efforts to organize their own national information systems. Furthermore, international and regional organizations, both governmental and nongovernmental, have become more concerned with the growing information gap between the more and the less developed worlds, and have increased their efforts to help the latter improve their abilities to generate and handle information.

All these endeavors reflected a substantial idealism: new technologies, it was believed, would extend the benefits of information to all, in forms tailored to individual needs and skills and, hence, would foster development and enhance the quality of life in all nations and throughout all sectors of society.

This optimistic view has been challenged by research in the communication and information fields-research indicating that increased availability of information does no necessarily lead to the improvement of all men but, on the contrary, may result in comparative deprivation. It became increasingly evident that as information in society becomes more available, the poor get poorer and the rich get richer. Writers began referring to this evidence as the "knowledge gap," "the information gap," "and the communication effects gap."

The more significant reactions to the "gap hypothesis" arose out of concern of Third World writers for equality and for the development of their countries. What was to be known as the liberation literature affected a variety of fields. The late 1960s and early 1970s became years of assessment and conceptual revision: in economics the economic growth approach was being attacked; political science was questioning and evaluating basic institutions and values of society; a new look was being taken at the meaning od development; and the ability of conventional schooling to yield social and even educational success was being strongly questioned.

Essentially theorists in developing countries argue that for true change to take place, a revolution of ideas and values must accompany a transformation of structures. As it has been pointed out, not all structural changes are for the better when seen from that focuses on the improvement of man. In other words, development is first of all the development of man out of conditions of exploitation, poverty and oppression. For this reason, Latin American theologians, social scientists, planners prefer to substitute for "development" the term "liberation," which implies that the underdeveloped assume control their own process. For Paolo Freire, the Brazilian educator, liberation is to engage in "cultural action for freedom."

The preceding issues comprise one of the greatest challenges posed to governments in the planning of national development: the plight of rural and marginal urban populations, which constitute what Paolo Freire calls "the culture of silence" that crosses national and cultural boundaries and covers a great part of our world. It is among such populations that the cynical, evasive, or merely muddled schemes of economic development have produced the greatest social inequity and human suffering.

Freire believes that one of the gravest obstacles to the achievement of liberation is that the situation of underdevelopment is so oppressive, so deshumanizing, that it absorbs those within it, and thereby acts to submerge men's consciousness. Thus it follows that people bring into the innovation process the marks of their origin: their perceptions, their prejudices, their deformations. According to Freire, these perceptions include on the part of the innovators, "a lack of confidence in the ability of those they want to help," and on the part of the adopters, both a lack of consciousness of their own situation and a lack of confidence in their own knowledge and ability.

Given the preceding context, to surmount the situation of underdevelopment (or oppression as Freire puts it), both innovators and adopters must critically recognize the causes of underdevelopment, so that through transforming action they can create a new situation. This transformation requires the development of a pedagogy; a pedagogy "which must be forged with not for the oppressed (whether individuals or peoples) in the incessant struggle to regain their humanity." This is what Freire calls the pedagogy of the oppressed, and central to this pedagogy in the concept of conscientizazacao, a term which refers to learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions. Conscientizacao and transforming action are so closely linked that one does not occur without the other. "Word and action [Freire says] are intimately interdependent." The problem is that the oppressed have lost the "word" and the rarely realize that they, too, "know things" they have learned in their relations with the world and other men.

According to Freire, the appropriate method to help the oppressed unveil their own consciousness is dialogue, a permanent dialogue that the leadership establishes with the oppressed. Hence the process of change is eminently a communication process. In other words, social change is based on a dialectic between economic, political, and cultural realities as planned by the leadership, and as personally experienced by participants.

Participation in the social and political process, therefore, means being able to decode the social realities as codified (structured) by others as well as encoding realities as personally experienced. Some individuals, groups, and societies are marginal not only because they cannot decode the social realities as encoded by others, but primarily because they cannot encode (and therefore structure for purposes of transmission) social realities as they personally experience them. This is what Freire means when he says that the oppressed have lost the "word." The "gap" idea, therefore, is a central idea in any concern for communication, in any concern for development, and it is indeed the librarian's concern.

Herein lies the key to the role of librarianship as a change agent in underdeveloped societies. Until now information theory and research, have concentrated on the first part of the dialetic relationship and have completely ignored the second. Now the new orientations are telling us that an individual's perception about a situation is the best indication of when and how that individual will communicate about that situation. Freire postulates that the pedagogy of the oppressed must deal with the problem of both the oppressed's and the oppressor's consciousness; in other words, it must take into account their world view, or in terms of Ortega y Gasset, the Spanish philosopher, their "vital perspective."

Change, innovation, and development (including literacy) are not gifts bestowed by the leadership, or by those who are committed the the process. They are the result of a dialectic process between innovators and participants in which all involved learn to recognize their own consciousness, and in that process, which is essentially a communication process, the modern librarian has a central role to play. Research, theory, experience and idealism are converging to indicate alternative communications strategies and are beginning to explain the "how" of that communicating.

The new orientations confirm the calls for a new type of professional and for a bold and nontraditional library service which cuts across the compartmentalization imposed by tradition and organizations, to meet the circumstances and conditions in which people find themselves. Development implies change, and development planning is history in the making. Waiting for individual participants within our programs to make verbalize their demands once they have internalized the importance of information is to misunderstand the dynamics of planned change and to stultify the role of leadership in the development process.

IFLA GENERAL CONFERENCE NEW DELHI 1992

Division: Libraries serving the general publi

Section/RT: Libraries for the blind

Joint Meeting with:

WORKSHOP THEME (IF APPLICABLE):

157-BLIND-E

International Cooperation on Library Services to the Visually Handicapped; outcome of the Asian Seminar

by

Hiroshi Kawamura, Chairman of the Section of Libraries for the Blind/IFLA

University of Tokyo Library
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Japan

For internal use only:

Meeting No: 77

SI: yes/no

Estimated number of participants in the meeting:

International Cooperation on Library Services to the Visually Handicapped; outcome of the Asian Seminar

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Furtherance of literacy and library services for people with visual disabilities in developing countries has been a major concern of the Section of Libraries for the Blind/IFLA since its inception.

Section of Libraries for the Blind, SLB/IFLA in short, held an African Seminar in Tanzania as early as 1980, sponsored by UNESCO. The result was discussed at the IFLA Nairobi General Conference in 1984.

Due to lack of funding, the Asian Seminar was postponed in spite of its inclusion in the Medium Term Programme of SLB/IFLA until 1991.

The preparation of the Asian Seminar was stimulated by an Expert Meeting of SLB/IFLA held in conjunction with the 1986 IFLA General Conference in Tokyo.

The experiences of the Expert Meeting led Japanese organizers to attempt to hold the Asian Seminar which has been longed for by Asian colleagues.

On the other hand, delegates to the Expert Meeting in Tokyo found new potential of international cooperation in the field of library services to the visually handicapped through the Asian Seminar.

Thus, the first draft project proposal was submitted to the Standing Committee of SLB/IFLA held in Paris in 1989.

With the approval of SLB/IFLA, The Japanese Organizing Group was set up in order for fund raising.

Detailed discussion on the intentions and goals of the Asian Seminar during the IFLA Stockholm General Conference made Standing Committee of SLB/IFLA convinced of the objectives of the Seminar.

Fund raising was the responsibility of the Japanese Organizing Committee, which was officially formulated in 1990 by the Association of Japanese Libraries for the Blind, Japan Library Association and SLB/IFLA represented by myself.

SLB/IFLA was totally responsible for the professional contents.

Main objectives of the Seminar were "knowing each other and sharing experiences and ideas".

Inputs from both developing and industrialized countries were stressed.

In order to secure the outcome, the contents of the Seminar was divided into two parts; sessions and workshops.

Each invited delegate involved in or intending to develop library services or literacy programmes submitted a report including descriptions on "involvement in the field of services to the visually handicapped, name of organization, [and] future project" prior to the Seminar. Those country reports were circulated among participants along with session/workshop papers which included basic outlines of production of special format materials, library services to the visually handicapped and the needs of people with visual disabilities.

Although sessions and workshops were led by participants from industrialized countries, active responses and contributions of delegates from developing countries proved the importance of "sharing experiences and ideas" among 50 participants from 25 countries.

Throughout the workshops, every participant looked into "relevant" or "contextual" technology which best fit to the social and economic environment of the region.

The basic texts written by session/workshop leaders were found useful to both developing and industrialized countries.

In order to introduce the structure of the international cooperation programmes, Mrs. Birgitta Bergdahl, Director of one of IFLA's Core Programmes, Advancement of Librarianship in the Third World (ALP), was invited.

As a result of the Asian Seminar in Tokyo, Nepal Association for the Blind developed its project of establishing talking book production and submitted to SLB/IFLA. During the 1991 Moscow General Conference of IFLA, the Standing Committee analyzed the project proposal and decided to endorse it to the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA). The Nepal project has been approved by DANIDA.

In conjunction with the 1992 IFLA General Conference in New Delhi, SLB/IFLA held a follow-up seminar in Dehradun, India, with the support of the National Institute for the Visually Handicapped. Throughout the Dehradun Seminar, participants from 20 countries including India could share the developments since Tokyo Seminar as well as important Indian experiences.

In addition to "knowing each other and sharing experiences and ideas", the Seminar reached conclusions including;

of crucial importance of an Indian Conference on library services to the visually handicapped.

the urgent publication of an international directory of suppliers of special format materials in Asian languages.

the implementation of the Florence Agreement which supports "free matter for the blind" in international exchange of materials and devices for the visually handicapped.

The Standing Committee has decided to publish the Interna-

tional Directory requested by the Dehradun Seminar as soon as possible and distribute it world-wide and free of charge. This decision was submitted to the Coordinating Board of the IFLA's Division of Libraries Serving the General Public held in Delhi and approved.

Proceedings of the Asian Seminar on Library Services to the Visually Handicapped has been published by the Japanese Organizing Committee. The proceedings of the Dehradun Seminar is also proposed.

In February 1993, a Latin American and Caribbean Seminar on Library Services to the Visually Handicapped hosted by the National Library of Cuba "Jose Marti" is going to be held in Havana. Professional contents is being finalized by the initiative of the SLB/IFLA with the assistance of ALP, Latin American and Caribbean Section of IFLA and the National Library of Cuba.

Without a doubt, international cooperation is the key concern of IFLA. The Library profession should seek access to information of people in the world, regardless of disabilities and regions where they live.

Actual activities on cooperation programmes like international seminars held by SLB/IFLA could only be supported by the enthusiasm of the people involved and very urgent as well as serious needs of users with disabilities living in developing countries.

SLB/IFLA is convinced of the importance of international cooperation not only for developing countries but also for industrialized countries because, no doubt, it enriches services of both.

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   Available from Hiroshi Kawamura, c/o University of Tokyo Library, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo 113, Japan, upon request. Free of charge.

THAI IBBY

คณะกรรมการระหว่างชาติว่าด้วยหนังสือสำหรับเยาวชน สาขาไทย (กนย)
มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ ประสานมิตร สุขุมวิท 23, กรุงเทพฯ 10110
Thai Section of International Board on Books for Young People
Srinakharinwirot University, Sukhumvit 23, Bangkok 10110 Thailand.

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PROJECT SUBMISSION FORM

NAME OF APPLICANT	:	The Thai Section of International Board on Books for Young People
ADDRESS	:	Srinakharinwirot University, Sukhumvit 23, Bangkok 10110 THAILAND
TELEFAX	:	(662) 574-5599 and (662) 513-2498
TITLE OF THE PROJECT	:	Thai-Laos Project on Books for Young People

by Somboon Singkamanan

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Tel. (662) 258-4118 Fax: (662) 258-4006, 259-9150

1. BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION

Laos and Thailand are sister countries with the boundaries joining each other. Lao and Thai peoples have the same cultural background, especially in the aspects of languages and literatures. People of the two countries can communicate and understand one another without the interpreter.

Regarding the books for young people, Laos has received the portable libraries from Thailand. It was found that the portable libraries were applicable to the needs of books among Lao children. However, the quantity and the quality of books were not sufficiently attractive.

In December 1990, a group of academicians from the Portable Library Project made a trip to Laos to give a demonstration about reading promotion. Bilateral co-operation to produce books for Lao children was developed as a result. It is hoped that this co-operation will lead to the co-publishing of books for children between the two sister countries.

2. OBJECTIVES

(1) To conserve and promote old folklores, folk tales and literatures.

(2) To develop writers and illustrators of books for children.

(3) To produce books suitable for young people.

(4) To experiment the co-publishing project between Laos and Thailand.

(5) To promote reading among young readers.

3. TARGET GROUP

Approximately 25 participants from Laos including 10 writers, 10 illustrators and 5 editors,and 50 reading activists including librarians, teachers, story tellers, educators and social workers.

4. INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

The project will be carried out by the two parties : Laos and Thailand.

Laos - The Vannasin Division, Department of Literature, Department of Book Publishing, National Library, Ministry of Information and Culture will take part in the overall project implementation.

Thailand - THAI IBBY and Srinakarinwirot University will provide resource persons for this project and will carry out the co-ordination duty.

5. PERSON RESPONSIBLE

Name : Somboon Singkamanan

Education : M.ED. (Lib.Science)

Position :
- Senior Lecturer, Department of Children 's Literature, Faculty of Information Science, Srinakharinwirot University.
- Honorary Secretary General of Thai IBBY
- Excecutive Committee of IBBY International.
- Director of Portable Library Project.

Experiences :
- Research fellow at the International Youth Library, Munich.
- Conducting 5 workshops on writing for children
- Conducting 4 workshops on reading animation
- Presenting papers at IFLA, IBBY, IRA etc.
- Participating on World Conference on Education for All, 1990
- Speaker at several international seminars
- Author of 16 picture books

6. PROJECT COMPONENTS

The project will include the following activities;

- **Writing and illustrating workshop**
- **Editing workshop**
- **Book publishing**
- **Book promotion and distribution**
- **Reading animation workshop**
- **The overall project evaluation.**

7.TIME SCHEDULE

Phase I : Writing and Illustrating Workshop

Date : October 25-31, 1991

Venue: - Nam Nguem Dam, Tha Lad, Vientiane, Laos

Out of this workshop 20 manuscripts from children folk tales, old folklores and literature; and 10 manuscripts from creative writing will be prepared.

Phase II: Editing Workshop

Date : May 21-26, 1992

Venue : Vientian Laos

This workshop is for editing and rewriting of the 30 manuscripts prepared from the previous workshop.

Phase III: Book Publishing

Date : July 1992 - November 1993

The project intends to publish all the books written and illustrated during the the previous two workshops. The books will be published in both Thai and Lao languages, for approximately 5,000 copies each of all titles.

The books will be published in Thailand. To publish the books, the project will seek the co-operation of UNICEF-LAOS, UNESCO, SIDA, CIDA and Embassies' Small Projects and others agencies.

Phase IV : Book Promotion and Distribution

This includes books selling and workshop on reading animation for both countries.

Date : August 1993

The project will approach UNESCO, Asian Culture Center for UNESCO (ACCU), IFLA, Thai IBBY etc, for their co-operation in this particular part of the project.

Phase V : Evaluation and Follow-up

A workshop will be organized to evaluate the overall project in order to find out how much the project achieves its goals and objectives. The report will also be prepared at the completion of the project.

Work Plan

Year	1991	1992	1993	1994
	Phase I			
		Phase II		
	-------------	Phase III	------------	
			Phase IV	
				Phase V

8. PROJECT BUDGET

1. Writing and illustrating workshop	US$ 7,000.-
2. Editing workshop	US$ 4,500.-
3. Book Publishing (30 titles @ 5,000 copies)	US$ 124,500.-
4. Promotion & distribution	US$ 9,000.-
5. Evaluation and follow up	US$ 5,000.-
Total	US$ 150,000.-

(One hundred and fifty thousand US dollars)

SOURCES OF FUNDING

- UNICEF LAOS	US$ 7,000.-
- SIDA through IFLA	US$ 25,000.-
- Others	US$ 118,500.-

9.SUPPORT FROM AUTHORITIES/ORGANIZATIONS

Writing and illustrating workshops which is the Phase I of the project had been submitted to UNICEF, LAOS and was granted with US$ 7,000. SIDA through IFLA ALP Programme will support US$ 25,000. to carry out editing workshop, publish few titles, and reading animation workshop.

10.REPORTING, MONITORING, EVALUATION

At the end of each phase a report will be written and submitted to the support organizations. Article about the activities will be published in local newspapers both in Laos and Thai. After the project has been carried out, a final report will be done in English as a professional publication. Slide and/or viedo of the activities will be presented as well as productions of the workshop, especially children's books.

11.CONTINUITY

The project has its built-in continuity for example writing and illustrating workshop will lead the editing workshop and publishing. At the end of the project, there will be more writers, illustrators, editors, publishers,and reading activists in Laos. More children books of quality will be produced for Thai and Lao young readers. It is hoped that through books, the new generation of the two countries will understand each other's culture aspects and lives. Close co-operation between two sister countries will be re-united and strengthened. There will be a continuation of co-operation and sharing in related programmes concerning the development and promotion of books for children. It is also hoped that this project will be a creation of the sub-regional co-operation model in the field of books and reading promotion.

SIGNATURE: Somboon

Somboon Singkamanan

164 - PUBL
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CHILD

Promotion of Literacy of Handicapped Children in India Through Library Services

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Special Education and Extension Services
NCERT
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Introduction

The National Policy on Education 1986 has set the goal of providing education to all children, including the disabled. The Programme of Action of the NPE has laid the target of providing education to all such disabled children who can receive education in common schools without much formal preparation by 1990-95. It has also been stated in the Programme of Action that education will also be provided to all such severely disabled children who require formal and longish preparation, extensive restorative services, and special support for education because of their sensory or intellectual disabilities. We are aiming at educating all such disabled children by 2000 A.D.

Magnitude of the Task

As per the statistics provided in the National Sample Survey (NSS) of 1981, there are about 13.6 million disabled people in India. These figures do not include children with learning disabilities and disabled children in the age group of 0-4 years. Mental Retardation was excluded from the survey, but National Institute for the Mentally Handicapped (NIMH) estimates of 1988 indicate that about two per cent of the total population of India comprises of mentally retarded persons.

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Some more statistics of disability is alarming. It is estimated that about 80 per cent of the world's disabled population live in developing countries, and the WHO (1981) estimates indicate a possible 15-20 per cent disability rate in developing countries, compared to ten per cent in the developed world.

The NPE indicates that there are about one thousand special schools in India and the total number of enrollment of disabled children in those special schools is about sixty thousand only. The most saddening note is that while most of the children belonging to disadvantaged groups such as scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, girls and educationally backward, minorities are reaching their population proportion in enrolment at primary level, the percentage enrollment of disabled children to the total enrollment is less than on per cent (0.07).

These figures on the one hand give a very dismal picture so far as education of disabled children in our coutry is concerned, and on the other hand it gives us the strength and courage to redouble our vigour for the promotion of educational services to this vast group of unserved disabled children who, to put in figuratively, are languishing in the dungeon of dayless gloom.

Expansion of Educational Services for the Disabled through Library Services

Considering the vast number of population of disabled in our country and the goal of Education for all by 2000 A.D., we will have to evolve suitable programmes to cater to the vast number of unserved handicapped population who are denied educational opportunities. In a country like India where 80 per cent population belong to the rural areas, there are no educational services for the handicapped. Library Services in our country is basically clustered in the urban areas and there are practically no facilities for the vast number of handicapped population in the rural areas. Library services should take due note of this and aim at providing educational services in the rural areas.

Most of the public libraries in our country are well equipped to cater to the needs of non-handicapped population. Since the reading and writing methodology of all categories of handicapped children except the blind is the same, all the other groups of the handicapped population except blind can take the facility of library services.

However, the reading and writing methodology of the visually handicapped children is unique and the methodology of the reading and writing of the blind is very different. The braille script, which is a permutation and combination of six dots, is the basic medium of reading and writing for the visually handicapped children. Very few of the public library services in our country have literature in the braille script for the visually handicapped population.

The visually handicapped are, therefore, deprived of having the benefits of library services, as they have no reading material suitable to their special needs. It is, therefore, imperative that all public libraries in this sub-continent should have a sub-section of braille books and periodicals for the benefit of the vast number of visually handicapped population.

IFLA GENERAL CONFERENCE NEW DELHI 1992

Division:

Section/RT: SCHOOL LIBRARIES

Joint Meeting with:

WORKSHOP THEME (IF APPLICABLE):

17-SCHOOL-2-E

Meeting the Needs of Students at an International School

by

Bandana Sen

The American Embassy School, New Delhi, India

For internal use only:

Meeting No: 76

SI: yes/[✓ no]

Estimated number of participants in the meeting:

The American Embassy School (AES) is situated in the heart of New Delhi, surrounded by embassies. The campus is beautifully landscaped, and there are central buildings for each of the schools, elementary, middle, and high school. This paper is concerned only with the elementary school and the elementary library program.

The school believes in the dignity and worth of each student. All students have equal opportunities for education consistent with individual capabilities, and personal and social needs. The most interesting feature of AES is its student body. We have approximately 700 students of which 400 belong to the elementary section. Thirty percent of the students are from the United States, and the rest come from some 50 other countries. The students have varied cultural and educational backgrounds, and many have travelled extensively and have exciting lifestyles. Some children come with 'zero' English, and we have children from every level of ability, from students with learning disabilities to those working above grade level. This makes the work in the library interesting and demanding.

Visually, we try to make the library inviting to help stimulate the child's fantasy world. We have created welcoming areas with colorful cushions, alcoves with tables for study, and the walls are decorated with characters from children's literature. We also have stuffed toys, so the students feel comfortable and at home. Each week we change our window displays and the book displays so visits to the library are fun and are always a new experience for the children.

Library sessions begin with students sitting on a carpeted center stage with the librarian seated on a low chair, which all helps to create a friendly, caring and informal atmosphere. The people who work in the library should convey to the students that they are there to help, that they are always ready to listen, and are friendly and approachable.

The librarian must know how to attract children to books. This attraction is deeper than mere circulation numbers. You and I have a genuine belief in the power of books. The librarian in the 21st century has to provide books and programs for the individual differences in reading, to serve not only various levels of reading abilities but also the readers' interests. The librarian at AES has to remember these individual differences. Some children are just learning to read, some can read another language but not English, and others are exceptional readers.

The following are the programs I have developed to reach the varied elementary student body of AES.

I launched a reading program called the 'Read-a-saurus Club' two years ago. The purpose was to entice the slow- and the non-reader. Initially, I was apprehensive, not knowing where this would lead -- would it be successful? The result was overwhelming. Each child who became a member of this Club had to make a personal contract with the librarian stating how many books the child would read within a certain period of time. The time was stipulated by the librarian, and a three month period was given on a trial basis. They could decide to exceed their number of books within this time period.

This program was open to third to fifth grade students. To ensure that students chose appropriate reading, the titles were chosen in advance by the librarian. Titles for each grade level were chosen so that better readers could be challenged and slower readers provided with materials comfortable to their reading ability. Books were chosen from folktale, biography, and fiction categories. We depended heavily on good literature for children.

For each child to get credit for his reading, the book had to be first approved by the librarian. Then, after reading the book, the child had to personally report to the librarian and give a summary or answer questions about the book, at the librarian's discretion.

The ultimate success of this Club was that when all contracts were completed, a sumptuous lunch hosted by the library was held under a sunny winter sky with the Read-a-saurus members as guests. A sidelight of the Club was that teachers and parents were also invited to join. All were made to feel special, and awards were given to each member.

We depend heavily on the various special programs we do to meet the needs of the individual student. In kindergarten to second grade, we had discussions following the death of Dr. Seuss. We used the Socratic seminar method as one of our discussion techniques. These discussions were videotaped. We later showed the videotapes to the students to get a feedback of their responses. During our storytime sessions, a lot of time is spent on questioning techniques as the children eagerly participate.

Then we had a special second seminar about Bill Peet. By then the children had matured enough to know what to look for in a good picture book. They can learn to recognize the styles and techniques of well-known authors, and they enjoy reading several books by the same author.

For grades three through five, when we teach library skills such as the Dewey Decimal System and the card catalog, we use cooperative learning techniques and arrange the students in pairs. An average reader may be paired with an exceptional reader, or a non-English speaker with an

English speaker. At AES at no point in time do we forget the ESL student. They are an integral part of our student body. For example, in addition to the cooperative learning mentioned above, a lot of time was given to selecting titles for the Read-a-saurus Club to make sure that many materials were available for the ESL students.

We have the luxury of a small student body and small classes at AES. As I write this I can see their faces and their needs. I feel that the most important legacy the librarian can leave with her readers is a positive attitude toward reading, a love of books, and a desire to learn.

We depend heavily on non-fiction books for slow readers. They can easily gather visual information about the text directly from the illustrations. Today there are a number of non-fiction easy books that librarians could rely on to excite the less confident readers. The child of the Ninja Turtle age has so many interests that we as librarians can capitalize on them. The animal books are big favorites. Holidays provide themes for programs and stimulate children's interest. We celebrate every possible day in the calendar. Earth Day is used to sensitize the children and give them a sense of responsibility. They learn that they can change their parents' attitudes and behaviors in addition to their own. It is here that I have seen the greatest excitement among my readers. I have often felt that a seed of interest for reading was started with our holiday programs.

Another program which was a big success was 'Share Your Hobby for a Week.' We had, among other things, a collection of 445 erasers, animal bones, and frog figures of all types. Speakers from the community shared their interests with the children at this time. One father spoke about his lifelong love of trains. Another shared his international money collection. For weeks, we had to supply the children with books about trains.

During the winter, we had a 'Soup Week.' Parents brought their favorite national soups. Programs such as these appeal to all levels of readers and provide extension activities appropriate to all.

Being an international school, we teach about the various countries and celebrate their national and festival days. This is where the parents become our teaching partners. They bring in their crafts, folktales, their costumes and their cultural heritage. One year we learned how to do the calypso from Trinidad, and another time we learned Korean brush painting. Parents have shared Japanese origami and Danish paper cutting. During this period the whole library changes character and may become a little Korea or Japan. International students become motivated and emotionally involved with the library at these times. They come to know that we care about them and value their cultures. During the summer holiday we ask the international community to help us to build a special collection of books. We ask students and parents to bring us books from their home countries in their languages to add to our collection. Of course, this is entirely voluntary and the results are always rewarding and interesting. It is delightful to see how the children of these countries feel when they see their books on our shelves. These feelings are also experienced by the parental community, and they reinforce with their children the fact that the library cares.

The elementary library directs an annual school-wide book writing contest. The middle and high school children write for the elementary children. The books may have joint authorship, and books may be written in two or three languages. The elementary students are the judges for these books. More than 150 manuscripts were submitted this year. An annual awards assembly is held where the elementary school children take an active role in congratulating the winners. This program has a lasting effect on the school library as each year the 15 or 16 winning books are professionally bound and become a permanent part of the library collection.

During this school year I tried something new. A survey was conducted to discover the interests and hobbies of students in grades three to five. In the next session, when the children came to the library, we helped them to find books we had in their interest areas, using the card catalog and locating the books on the shelves. The children felt that we had come to know them better, and that we respected their interests.

I have found that sports books, books on the supernatural and how-to-do books are big baits for the children. Wordless books and predictable books give confidence to beginning readers. Realistic fiction, problems of growing up, and science fiction are especially enjoyed by the exceptional readers. I feel it is essential to choose good children's literature, well crafted story books, and books that captivate student attention and transport them to the world within the pages in a library collection.

Good books help to make students want to read. Children need to see a reason for reading and find personal meaning in stories.

We all know the importance of reading aloud to children. There is enough research showing the importance of listening to stories to the development of readers. The parent body at AES is a highly motivated group. They utilize the library facilities, and we support them with advice and thank them with Saturday open house coffees at the library.